

confidence, co-operation, challenges, co-operatives

CHANGING THE WORLD

told by Vida Goldstein (1869-1949)
and the Women's Political Association (1903-1919)

compiled by
Geraldine Robertson
womensweb.com.au

*'Should women enter Parliament?
Of course. Why not?'*
Vida Goldstein



For Holly Gurling. I owe you, Holly.

Changing the world told by Vida Goldstein (1869-1949 and the Women's Political Association (1903-1919)

Geraldine Robertson (compiler)

Online edition.

July, 2022

Cover Design: Deb Snibson.

© Creative Commons licence



ISBN: 978-0-646-85451-9: Paperback
Subjects: Social Sciences, Australian History

First Published by Women's Web stories actions in 2022 www.womensweb.com.au

The book is available at www.womensweb.com.au at printing cost plus postage if applicable.
Or contact me, Geraldine, and I will send you the PDF file for the online edition.

Geraldine Robertson,
Documenter
womensweb1@gmail.com

Women's Web stories, actions www.womensweb.com.au
Women Working Together suffrage and onwards www.womenworkingtogether.com.au
Prejudice and Reason some Australian women's responses to war
www.prejudiceandreason.com.au

CHANGING THE WORLD...

is for people who want change.

About a hundred years ago in Melbourne, Australia, a group of women acted on their shared desire for equality, social justice, peace and ethical governance; for everyone in the world.

They changed the world.

CHANGING THE WORLD...

mainly uses excerpts from their newsletters to allow Vida Goldstein and the Women's Political Association to tell their story in their own words.

They changed their world. We can change ours.

CONTENTS

Preface—5
Introduction—8

Part 1

Early On—16
Vida Goldstein—17
Standing for Parliament—24
The Women’s Political Association—28
War Preparedness Begets War—44

Part 2

The First World War: ‘We War against War’—48
Fighting Against Inequalities—78
Building Social Justice—86

Part 3

Peace? After the War is Over—103
Returning Soldiers—113
The ‘Voter’ Does Not Die—117

Appendix 1: *The Women’s Suffrage ‘Monster’ Petition*—122

Appendix 2: *Some Women’s Anti Conscription Songs*—123

Appendix 3: *Enemies of Vida Goldstein and the WPA*—125

Postscript: *Adverse Social Conditions in Melbourne a century ago*—131

Selected Bibliography—144
Acknowledgements—145
Women’s Web Publications—146
Reviews—147

PREFACE

Who were these changemakers from so long ago? We know they worked towards what they believed to be a better world for everyone; working with joy, hope and, when needed, courage. We know they changed the world.

I was astounded when I first saw their newsletters and saw their world as they experienced it rather than through the eyes of others. I had to document this.

They were a group of women living in Melbourne who were not satisfied with men dominating public life. They saw themselves as trailblazers. The day they won the vote and the right to stand for Parliament in 1908 a suffragist suggested a statue to commemorate the great event — a statue of Vida Goldstein with her foot on the back of their adversary, Sir Thomas Bent.¹

This was in jest but surely they would never have believed they would have to wait for an opportunity until 1973, when the League of Women Voters Victoria² had a display showcase made with a plaque on it reading '*Vida Goldstein: Pioneer of freedom and justice for women*'³ and presented it to the State Library of Victoria.

My understanding is that the library refused to accept it, claiming that there was no space for women in the Dewey decimal classification system it used!

In 1985, however, they succeeded in being publicly recognised with the first Victorian 150th Anniversary plaque to honour women. It was unveiled in the private Parliament House Gardens in Melbourne. It is small and access is heavily restricted. But it is there. The Women's Political Association is barely remembered at all.

Although some of their ideas now seem to belong in the past, or even be wrong, most galvanise today. Yet they are barely known. Are we going to leave it like this?

Geraldine

¹ Audrey Oldfield: At the victory celebration it was suggested that there should be a memorial to honour the Victorian women who had fought for the vote. Suggestions poured in which Vida recorded in her diary: an obelisk, a bed in the Women's Hospital, a Women's Centre, an annual garden party, a free kindergarten... The most interesting was that there should be erected a white marble statue of an upright Goldstein, with her foot on the neck of a prostrate black marble statue of Thomas Bent. *Woman Suffrage in Australia*

² www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE0116b.htm — League of Women Voters website

³ Janette M Bomford, *That Dangerous and Persuasive Woman* p.228 MUP 1993



Left — Margaret Baskerville sculpting statue of Sir Thomas Bent.



Right —Vida Goldstein plaque in Parliament House Gardens, Spring St., Melbourne:

In memory of ida Goldstein (1869-1949), Victorian born social reformer and suffragist. In 1890 she joined the movement for votes for women and later advocated the right of women to nominate as Parliamentary candidates. As an independent candidate for the Australian Senate in 1903, she became the first woman in the British Empire to stand for election to a national parliament. She also campaigned against militarism and racial discrimination and supported many other causes.

monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/people/humanitarian/display/32538

Mary Graham, 2008:

How do we live together (in a particular area, nation, or on earth),
without killing each other off?

How do we live without substantially damaging the environment?

Why do we live?

We need to find the answer to this question in a way that does not make people
feel alienated, lonely or murderous.

<http://australianhumanitiesreview.org/2008/11/01/some-thoughts-about-the-philosophical-underpinnings-of-aboriginal-worldviews/>

Daphne Marlatt, 2001:

History is not dead and gone. It lives on in us in the way it shapes our thought,
especially our thought about what is possible.

Sylvia Martin, *Passionate Friends*, Onlywomen Press, London

Faith Bandler, 1999:

It's time for us to remember that rights are not handed on a platter by
governments, they have to be won.

www.mtc.com.au/discover-more/mtc-now/faith-bandlers-faith-hope-and-reconciliation/ — Hope and Reconciliation speech, August 1999, Wollongong

Moira Rayner, 1997:

I want a society that offers a decent life for all... How do we build it together?

Rooting Democracy growing the society we want, Allen & Unwin 1997

Vida Goldstein, 1945:

Neither a return to free enterprise nor an advance to socialism will meet the bill...
Is there a lack of younger people fired with the desire to build a really new world,
to become real crusaders to establish a genuine co-operative movement
which makes service and not profit the foundation motive?

Maurice Blackburn papers, State Library of Victoria (SLV)

INTRODUCTION

This book aims to counter some confusions about the women's movement, as 'first' and 'second' wave feminists⁴ are frequently promoted negatively.

Women's Liberation continues the thread from the Suffrage Movement. It is a reference for what the word 'feminism' means and what it has meant to women over the last century, so a short snapshot is included here.

Joyce Stevens:

Because women's work is never done and is underpaid or boring or repetitious and we're the first to get the sack and what we look like is more important than what we do and if we get raped it's our own fault and if we get bashed we must have provoked it and if we raise our voices we're nagging bitches and if we enjoy sex we're nymphos and if we don't we're frigid and if we love women it's because we can't get a 'real' man and if we ask our doctors too many questions it's because we're neurotic and/or pushy and if we expect community care for children we're selfish and if we stand up for our rights we're aggressive and 'unfeminine' and if we don't we're typical weak females and if we want to get married we're out to trap a man and if we don't we're unnatural and because we still can't get an adequate safe contraceptive but men can walk on the moon and if we can't cope or don't want a pregnancy we're made to feel guilty about abortion and... for lots and lots of other reasons we are part of the women's liberation movement. *Women's Liberation Broadsheet 1975*

Zelda D'Aprano:

Women's Liberation believes that it is wrong to see women and men as two totally different groups of people with totally different ways of thinking, working and feeling. We can't know what people would be like if they weren't told all the time: 'You are a man and must be strong, brave, clearheaded...' 'You are a woman and must be pretty, helpful, motherly...' But we can see that people turn into MEN and WOMEN because they are told all their lives that this is what they must do, and this is how they must do it. Rivka Pile papers, Melbourne University

⁴ 'First wave' refers to the suffragettes. 'Second wave' refers to Women's Liberation, Women's Electoral Lobby et al.



Zelda by Zelda D'Aprano Spinifex Press 1995

Zelda D'Aprano:

The strength and courage of women was becoming more and more apparent to me. (Bon Hull was the first Victorian woman to enter prison because of the Vietnam war ...)

I now knew that the personal is political, and all human suffering, whether it be at work, in the home, in human relationships or through lack of money can only be tackled in totality.

To attempt to solve one-dimensional problems is to fragment humans and this will achieve nothing because the person is one being, and all these problems are inter-related and interconnected.

We had no one on our side, no political parties, no governments, no armies, no police, no trade unions and no religions.

All we had were ourselves — women —and we had our backs to the wall for there was nowhere we could go.

Zelda by Zelda D'Aprano, Spinifex Press 1995

Zelda D'Aprano: The 1969 Equal Pay case was approaching... We needed to chain ourselves up like the suffragettes did...

I did... I received a phone call from Alva Geike congratulating me on my courage and she said that if I did another chain up she and a friend of hers, Thelma Solomon, would like to be in it too...

The next day Thelma, Alva and I chained ourselves up... (We) realized that the time for being a *lady* was over and we had to develop an organisation for ourselves—an organisation that was prepared to fight...

We called our organisation *The Women's Action Committee**...

We had so much fun. We felt alive, so alive. It was a wonderful experience being part of the Women's Liberation Movement at that time... The media sneered and scoffed at us at first but later they realized we weren't going to go away so they took us more seriously.

www.womensweb.com.au/sources

**Geraldine: The Women's Action Committee became Women's Liberation in 1972.*



National Library of Australia

nla.pic-vn3510654-v

1975 International Women's Day, Melbourne, National Library of Australia

THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION MANIFESTO

Women's Liberation believes that women in our society are oppressed.

— We are economically oppressed: in jobs we do full work for half pay, in the home we do unpaid work full time.

— We are commercially exploited by advertisements, television, and press: legally we often have only the status of children.

— We are brought up to feel inadequate: educated to narrower horizons than men.

This is our specific oppression as women. It is as women that we are, therefore, organising.

We demand:

1. That Women Have control Over Their Bodies: We believe that this is denied us until we can decide whether to have children or not and when we have them.

2. The Repeal of Abortion Laws: Abortion on Request — Abortion is an essential part of birth control. Contraception without the right to abortion means that the State, in effect, controls our bodies if we become pregnant unwillingly. Women should have the right to decide whether or not to have an abortion.

3. Freely Available Contraception: More education on contraception is needed at an early age and, for this to be effective, contraceptives should be easily available and free on social security. Doctors should not have the right to refuse contraception on their own moral grounds.

4. Free 24-hour Community Controlled Child Care: The government should provide full child care facilities throughout Australia. These should be free and staffed by qualified people; men and women. The centres must be under the control of those who use them, to prevent bureaucratic 'baby dumps'. Women should not have to bear individual responsibility for the care of children.

5. Equal Job Opportunities and an End to Low Pay: Employers have no right to pay women less than men, or to keep women in menial jobs. The government must act to correct this injustice by making it illegal for employers to discriminate against women. Although, at first glance, the equal pay decision in 1972 seems favourable, the full effect of the decision will not become apparent until 1975. In other words, we have been 'bought off' until then.

6. Equal Education Opportunities: To enable women to have really equal opportunity, all schools must stop streaming women into 'service' jobs which reflect the wife/mother role — cleaners, teachers, nurses, secretaries, social workers — essentially supporting roles. Sexual bias in curricula should be eliminated. The education system must play a large part in undoing the conditioning of women to accept an inferior role, by encouraging women to assert themselves in all fields.

Women's Liberation Newsletter, March 1973 pp 5-6



Zelda's Cards, privately owned

Geraldine: At that time Australian women averaged 66% of male pay. In 1972 women set up the Women's Electoral Lobby, in part to address this issue.

WOMEN'S ELECTORAL LOBBY

The Victorian Women's Trust website: One day in February 1972, a handful of politically active feminists attended the first ever meeting of the Women's Electoral Lobby in Melbourne.

Since that day, WEL has been helping women achieve fairer pay, more opportunity and protection from sexism, discrimination and violence.

They have become a formidable force in Australian politics and public life.

www.vwt.org.au/gender-equality-timeline-australia/ — Victorian Women's Trust

I finish with a quote from Judy Small:



Judy Small at the Women's Web stories actions launch of *Women Working Together suffrage and onwards*, 31 March 2009 at the Welsh Church, Lonsdale Street Melbourne

Justice Judy Small 2016:*

I, for my whole life, and will be forever, a proud feminist. Now every time I say that I always feel I have to say 'and this is what I mean by that.'

Being a feminist to me means that I am willing to work with any person, of any gender, colour, nationality, political persuasion, level of ability or economic status, who is willing to work with me to make this world a better place for women, on the clear and certain understanding that if it is a better place for women it will be a better place for everybody.

Accountability, Engagement and Activism, ARC Justice, Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Service, 2016, YouTube

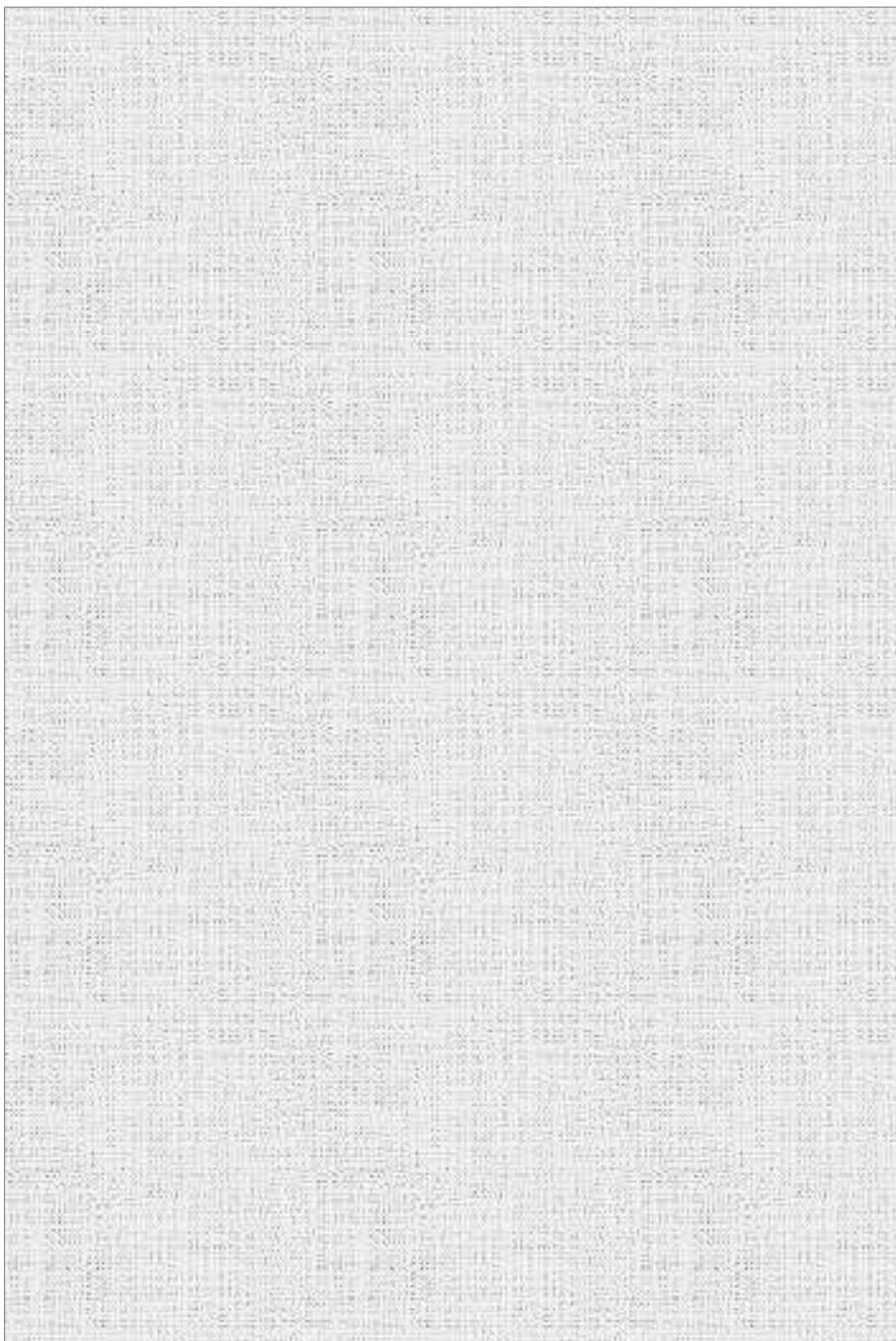
Do we need more to enable us to face tomorrow with the courage, conviction and joy shown here? These women's words and actions over so many decades are part of our heritage as much as the words and actions of their enemies, or others not discussed.

We can choose what we value, what we remember and pass on to generations to follow.

**Geraldine: Judy Small is also a singer-songwriter with songs that are particularly relevant here such as 'Mothers Daughters Wives, Lest We Forget, Stand or fall, Until, Never Turning Back, One Voice in the Crowd.'*



At the above interview Judy also remarked 'There has never been a political cause or an activist cause which hasn't had music that goes with it. Never.'



PART 1

EARLY ON

The Battle for Women's Political Freedom

There were 18 suffrage bills presented to the Victorian Parliament from 1889 to 1908, 'a hardy annual', according to Vida Goldstein. It was a long campaign. Many agitated when they were young and persisted for decades — forty nine years of activism in Henrietta Dugdale's case.

Unknown source

1898—Melbourne, Australia

Joan Curlewis: 'Three hundred women invade Parliament House' screamed the headlines. The year was 1898 and these women were after the vote... In the press and pulpit women were ridiculed, scoffed at and charged with immorality (even though the Women's Christian Temperance Union took a leading part in the suffrage campaign).

Women's Lib in 1898, Joan Curlewis papers, State Library of Victoria

Did We?

Did we seek to be forbidden from all trades that pay?
Did we claim lower wages for a man's full work day?
Did we petition for the laws wherein our shame is shown?
That not a woman's child — or her body — is her own?

The Australian Women's Sphere

Catching Up with Father

Alice Henry: It seems to me that Father has been getting a great many new privileges during the last hundred years or so, and Mother has been left out in the cold. We will see about this.

Royal Society of Victoria

VIDA GOLDSTEIN



Suffragist
Social Justice Fighter
Peace Advocate

Vida Goldstein: The first record of Australian womanhood in Australia was when Mrs Dugdale of Melbourne began writing to the press (Argus) in favour of the enfranchisement of women.

Royal Society of Victoria

Vida Goldstein: Women have never argued that women's suffrage would reform the world. They claim that the ballot is a powerful weapon with which to combat social and industrial wrongs... It may matter very little personally to any individual woman, whether she has the vote or not. It is of vital importance to the interests of women as a class, that they should have representative government.

Vida Goldstein's notes

The Women's Suffrage 'Monster' Petition 1891



The original petition is approximately 260 metres long and 200mm wide and is made of paper pasted to cotton or linen fabric backing, rolled onto a cardboard spindle which rests on a Perspex stand. It takes three people three hours to unroll the petition from one spool to another — a slow and careful process. The approximate 30,000 signatures vary in quality and colour inks, even pencil. *See Appendix 1.*

Vida Goldstein: Thirty-three thousand signatures to the Suffrage petition were obtained in less than six months. It was the largest petition that had ever been presented to Parliament on any question and tremendous interest was aroused when the bulky document was carried by several attendants into the legislative chamber.

Royal historical Society of Victoria 45(c)

Vida Goldstein: There never was any opposition from the men of Victoria, as a whole... The few women who refused to sign the Petition were, almost without exception, those whose interests ended at the garden gate. Very rarely were refusals made by the wives of working men and by women who took part in social reform work outside the house. These women came face to face with the adverse conditions of human existence, with social, industrial, and moral problems, and saw the urgent need for women taking part in public affairs.

The result of the canvass was that wherever the workers went, in city or country, they found the great majority of women in favour of the vote, and of being on a footing of equality with men in every respect. A striking feature of the canvass was that this feeling of equality between men and women was vital in the industrial suburbs. Never once were the canvassers met by a working man who said, 'I won't allow my wife to sign the Petition.'

The Struggle for Woman Suffrage—summary of the Suffrage Movement in Victoria in Pioneer Pathways Sixty Years of Citizenship 1887-1947

Vida Goldstein: In 1894 our anti-suffrage legislators said to us, 'Wait, until we see how woman suffrage works in New Zealand.' In 1896 they said 'Wait, until we see how it works in South Australia;' in 1900 they said 'Wait for the experience in West Australia;' in 1902, 'Wait, just a little longer, until we see the result in the Commonwealth.'

We waited, not in silence, but protesting and working all the time, at every election getting more and more pledged supporters — with what result? That, in 1908, we find ourselves crushed between our straight out opponents and our professed friends, the Conservative party on the one hand, and the Labo[u]r* and Liberal Parties on the other.

Woman Suffrage in Australia, Victorian Women's Trust

**Geraldine: The WPA spelt the Labor Party as 'Labour Party,' as it had been spelt until 1913, but they continued spelling it that way. I have changed the spelling back to 'Labor Party' for clarity, here and from this point forward.*

1902—Vida Goldstein, Australian delegate to 1st International Woman Suffrage Conference (IWSA)—Washington D.C. 1902



Alice Henry: Australian women were represented internationally in 1902 at the conference of the newly formed International Woman Suffrage Alliance, where Miss Goldstein was the delegate for both Australia and New Zealand.

Marching Towards Citizenship

Audrey Oldfield: She carried a commission from the Victorian Government to inquire into methods of dealing with neglected children, one from the Criminology Society to study the penal system, and one from the Trades Hall Council to inquire into trade unions.

Woman Suffrage in Australia



Our Delegate

The Australian Women's Sphere 10 April 1902:

We give extracts from Miss Goldstein's letters, as will, in our opinion, be likely to interest our readers — The first meeting of the first International Woman Suffrage Conference took place on the 19th.

Vida Goldstein: Miss Anthony was elected president and myself secretary. Just think of it; it will be the great memory of my life...

I had the privilege of meeting... President Roosevelt... (who) I saw in his private office in the White House... I was introduced to him, and he said, gripping my arm in a vice, 'I am delighted to meet you'. All Americans say that, and you often feel that it is a mere *façon de parler*, but there is no doubting the cordiality of Mr Roosevelt's greeting.

'And you're from Australia: I'm delighted to hear that. Do you know I'm very interested in your country, and in New Zealand, which seems to be making great progress. Of course, you know I had a number of Australians in my regiment?' 'Yes', I replied, 'and you found them good men and true?'

'Excellent. Excellent.'

General conversation followed about social and political conditions here, and then he said he hoped that someday he might visit Australia. 'I hope you will', I said, 'you may be sure we would give you a warm welcome'.

'I'm sure you would, but you know, in this country I feel much more at home in the West than I do in the East, and, if ever I visit Australia, I expect to feel more at home on a buck jumper in the bush than in your great cities...'

I was disappointed in not meeting Mrs Roosevelt, but while I was in Washington, their eldest boy was in the country dangerously ill with typhoid fever, and it was only by great good luck that I saw Mr Roosevelt.

To America and Back, Vida Goldstein

Geraldine: Vida was the first Australian to meet an American President at the White House. When she came home she went on a fundraising lecture tour 'To America and Back'.

In the journal she published 'The Australian Women's Sphere', she also wrote an open letter to feminists in the United States, partly quoted here. The name 'The Australian Women's Sphere' came from her support for the idea that a woman's sphere is the whole world. (Wikipedia)



The Australian Women's Sphere (1900-1905)

Vida Goldstein, editor and publisher

Impressions of the Woman Suffrage Movement in the United States Letter to the International Woman Suffrage Association

The Australian Women's Sphere 10 April 1902:

Vida Goldstein: My Dear Friends, Having recently travelled over a considerable portion of your vast country, I think you will be interested in hearing something of my impressions of the woman suffrage movement in the United States, especially as I am now an enfranchised woman, eligible for a seat and for a Cabinet appointment in the Australian National Parliament, rights to which I was not entitled when I attended the International Woman Suffrage Conference in Washington, and addressed audiences the United States.⁵

Australia now leads the way in the suffrage movement, for she is the only country in the world which has endowed its [white] women with national suffrage, but we Australian women do not forget how much we owe our political freedom to the women of America.

While the names of Mary Anstell, Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill, Lydia Becker, Mrs Jameson, Mrs Bodichon, Bessie Rayner Parkes, Millicent Garrett Fawcett and others will always be gratefully remembered by us, we cannot but feel that we are also indebted to the pioneer women of your land, for American women were the first in the world to organise for the purpose of securing absolute educational, social, legal and political equality with men.

⁵ Yvonne Smith: Adult Suffrage Bill (No 2) passed both houses 24/11/1908... Proclaimed in the Victorian Government Gazette on 31/3/1909.

Taking Time: A Women's Historical Data Kit, Union of Australian Women

The little band of women, headed by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who met at Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848, must for ever be enshrined in the hearts of woman suffragists all the world over, as also will be Little Wyoming, the first State to enfranchise its women – as far back as 1869 — just two years after John Stuart Mill's Suffrage amendment in the House of Commons ...

And because we women in the Land of the Southern Cross are reaping what England and America has sown, we are all the more eager to help our English sisters and American cousins in their struggle for freedom.

Our chief care will be to so use our right of suffrage that the men of other nations will soon want to follow the example of the Australian champions of woman's enfranchisement...

You want, and must have, the support of the rank and file of the working people. And just here is your weakness; you haven't got it.

History repeats itself in your country as elsewhere, and every social reform worth having has been won only through getting the support of the workers. It is they who feel the need for reform most, because it is they who suffer most in our present social conditions — it is they only who are prepared to fight for reform.

You want the vote in order that you may help to bring about better social and industrial conditions, but you won't get it without the help of the industrial section of the country. Of this I am convinced.

That is how we got it in Australia, and as soon as you make the workers of America realise that the suffrage question is a great economic question, they will join hands with you...

Yours most cordially, Vida Goldstein

More Reasons to have Women in Parliament

Vida Goldstein: The traces of our Common Law, which gives a man a right to chastise his wife, are still seen in the utterly inadequate penalties inflicted on men for assaults upon their wives, as contrasted with the severe penalties for assaults on men.

No married woman is eligible for the Public service. A man can will away his property, leaving wife and children destitute. A husband has only to go to another colony to be free from the responsibility of maintaining his wife and family. In industry women are frequently placed at a disadvantage owing to the political influence of men who have votes. In cases where separation is obtained by the wife owing to the brutality of the husband the magistrates have no power to order the custody of the children to the mother.

Women are at present excluded from various trades and professions, and they require the suffrage in order that they may remove all artificial disabilities which make sex and not merit the test of efficiency. Wherever women and children are in subjection, supervision by women is necessary, and the vote is needed to secure the appointment of women as inspectors of asylums, hospitals, schools, factories and gaols. Police matrons are urgently required in our watch-houses, where young girls and women, often in sickness and dire necessity, are locked up for the night in the sole charge of men.

Vida Goldstein's notes

Vida Goldstein, The world moves slowly, my masters! Woman's world especially; but it does move, and that's something to be thankful for. It took a big step forward on April 24th, 1902, when the first Australian Parliament enfranchised the [white] women of this great continent; it took another on December 16th, 1903, when, for the first time in the world's history, the women of a nation took part in the making of a National Parliament.

Review of Reviews

STANDING FOR PARLIAMENT

Geraldine: Vida stood for Parliament as an Independent again and again — 1903, 1910, 1913, 1914 and 1917, winning 51,497 votes in 1903 and 53,583 votes in 1910.

1903—Vida was chosen by suffragists to run for the Senate in Victoria— 'I Thoroughly Enjoyed My Campaign'

Vida Goldstein, I accepted nomination (for Federal Parliament — women couldn't stand for State Parliament until 1923) because I saw what a splendid educational value the campaign would have. I know I would attract much larger audiences as a candidate than if I were advertised to give a lecture on woman's part in the federal elections, or some such subject. I believed that people would come to my meetings out of curiosity to see the wild woman who sought to enter parliament.

They came, they saw, I conquered, that is, my arguments did, for no fair-minded person can hold out for five minutes against arguments for women's suffrage unless they seek to deny the right of self-government, and in these days of storm and stress one has no time to argue with such people... I thoroughly enjoyed my campaign.

Review of Reviews

Now that Women Possessed the Federal Vote

Alice Henry: In 1903, now that women possessed the Federal vote, Miss Goldstein formed the Women's Federal Political Association, for education of the new citizens in democracy, in both Federal and State affairs. An always interesting occasion was the regular meeting of the mock parliament that used to sit in the Assembly Hall, Collins St., the proceedings live enough and often amusing enough to attract the attention of the newspapers.

In 1905, the Association, tired of the long and purposed delay in winning the State Vote, assumed control of the State suffrage movement, under the title of the Women's Political Association. *Marching Towards Citizenship*

1913 Kooyong Election—Open Letter by Miss Vida Goldstein

The Woman Voter 22 April 1913:



Men and women of Kooyong — Nominated by the Women's Political Association as a candidate for Kooyong, there are special reasons why I should write to each one of you. You are asked to vote for me. No stone is being left unturned to induce you to vote against me — because I am a woman, because I am a non-party politician, because I am a progressive politician, because I defend the Suffragettes...

It is for these very reasons I urge you to vote for me.

My Third Campaign by Vida Goldstein

The Woman Voter 17 June 1913:

What a glorious campaign it was! Something to remember for all time! Never has there been such a political campaign in Australia — enormous attendances at meetings which were strictly political from start to finish, with not a reference, personal or political, to our opponent by ourselves, nor permitted to good but sometimes overzealous supporters.

We struck another blow for Freedom, Justice, Truth, Principle, and wherever we could reach people, either through meetings or through our hard-working, devoted canvassers, we had the majority of the men and women with us.

I thought nothing could have been more interesting than my Senate campaigns in 1903 and 1910, but this campaign... outrivalled the others in every respect. I have always been favoured with crowded meetings, but this time the numbers were phenomenal, and the many overflow meetings added to the general enthusiasm... On all sides our canvassers had to meet at the outset the usual prejudice against a woman going into Parliament, especially a non-party woman...

We chose Kooyong because I polled the largest number of votes there in 1910, because there are more women than men in the electorate, and because we hoped to have a straight out fight between a conservative and a democratic candidate. Had we selected a working class electorate we knew that we should have to fight a three-cornered contest.

Kooyong Election Polling Results [The Fusion Party won]

Sir Robert Wallace Best (Fusion [Party]) 18,545; Miss Vida Goldstein (Non-Party) 10,264; Mr Edward Wright Terry (Independent) 2,420; Informal 636.

THE FUSION GOVERNMENT—The Siamese Twins

Oh! you little things, how you cling together,
All through the merry hours, the stormy weather.
Queer little Siamese twins, man-made, not divine,
Kind of mechanical, sort of Frankenstein; ...

For, though you see, dears, you are in seeming
Only one 'party;' yet (am I dreaming?)
Since you have been welded together,
Pulling in harmony in the same tether,

Both of you, each, and without any trouble,
Have drawn from the Treasury salaries double!
One thing is clear, though; 'tis this: I ween you
Have but a half soul quartered between you.

MEF

Defeated but still Victorious

The Woman Voter 3 June 1913:

Miss Goldstein was not successful in winning Kooyong, but her magnificent record of 10,502 votes is a great moral victory. Never has any man candidate had to face such misrepresentation and calumny... Miss Goldstein's programme of legislative reforms for women and children was never opposed on any occasion. The opposition arose when she was

questioned in regard to the Suffragettes and Preference to Unionists. The minds of the people have been poisoned by press misrepresentation on both sides, but on every occasion Miss Goldstein's facts convinced the majority of her hearers, so much so that a man was heard to say, 'We won't ask her again about the Suffragettes. She's letting the women learn too much...'

Although our candidate was not elected, we all realize that a great moral victory has been won, and we are all ready for the next campaign.

First Aerial Mail—Miss Goldstein's Message to the Women of Australia

The Woman Voter 21 July 1914:

The first aerial mail in Australia was carried by M Guillaux, the French aviator, in a journey to Sydney, commenced on 16th. Miss Goldstein seized the opportunity of sending [to]: The Women of Australia, c/- The Premier of NSW, Sydney.

Dear Friends, if I am returned as member for Kooyong... I shall consider myself not only the representative of the electors of Kooyong, but the special representative of the women of Australia.

The Coming [1914] Federal Elections

The Woman Voter 21 July 1914:

Bella Lavender, MA: Once again the women of Australia have the opportunity of using their power as voters, not only for general political purposes, but also for their own particular needs. It is interesting to note that the present juncture is one especially demanding woman's initiative as a voter. Women will always appear to men as side issues, but it is astonishing that women should acquiesce in this view...

Where are the women coming forward to stand for election? They cannot, as parties now are balanced, for neither Liberal nor Labor will nominate a woman as their selected candidate, nor, indeed, should intelligent women tolerate this machine made politics.

THE WOMEN'S POLITICAL ASSOCIATION (WPA)

1905—The Women's Political Association



No. 1 August 1909—One Penny

The Woman Voter December 1909:

The WPA has decided to take as its colours Lavender, Green and Purple; lavender signifying the fragrance of all that is good in the past; green, growth, the unfolding and development of all that makes life rich in purposes and achievement; purple, the royalty of justice, the equal sovereignty of men and women.*

**Geraldine: Later they also used the Women's Social and Political Union colours of purple, white and green, which had become universal.*

To Readers

The Woman Voter 6 March 1911:

Miss Goldstein has gone to help the woman's cause at the heart of the action, and new fingers are in this little literary pie. We and you will quickly realise that writing and editing a paper isn't the easiest thing in the world. If the mysterious 'we'... do not give you your pennyworth... well, then, blame yourselves, for we will do our best... [If so] it is because you, the readers and members of the WPA have not been doing enough active work.

Non-Party Organisation

The Woman Voter 10 February 1913:

As the Women's Political Association is non-party, we get no assistance from the party organs, the 'Age' and the 'Argus.' They are always courteous to us, but naturally we cannot expect them to blow our trumpet as they blow the trumpet of the organisations they respectively support...

At the outset we must remove a false impression as to our non-party policy. It is not to be supposed that we are a body of gelatinous creatures, who have no political views. We have all got very decided views as to the merits of the various political parties — some of us are protectionists, some are free-traders, some are single taxers, some are labourites, some are socialists, some are anti-socialists, but we differ from those organised on party lines in one important particular.

We believe that questions affecting individual honour, private and public integrity and principle, the stability of the home, the welfare of children, the present salvation of the criminal and the depraved, the moral, social and economic injustice imposed on women — we believe that all these questions are greater than party, and that in 9 cases out of 10 they are sacrificed to party interests.

We know whereof we speak, for there is no organisation in the whole of Australia that has had the prolonged and close experience of party methods and party men inside and outside parliament that we have had. We have our party beliefs, but we do not make gods of them, and we believe that the members of all parties can work loyally together for any one of the planks embodied in our platform...

For two years the Women's Federal Women's Political Association (WFPA) confined itself to Federal Politics, but the continual delay in winning the State Vote was becoming such a serious matter that the movement was going backward instead of forward, and in February 1905 the WFPA assumed control of the State Suffrage movement, became the Women's Political Association (WPA) and devoted itself to the interests of women in both the State and Commonwealth Parliaments.

Signed: Bella Lavender, M.A., Lucy Paling, Hilda Moody, Doris Kerr, Selina Hooper BA, Doris Horden,⁶ for the Central Committee, Women's Political Association, Arlington Chambers, 229 Collins Street, Melbourne

⁶ Later Doris Blackburn



1911—Women’s Social & Political Union, London
‘Votes for Women’—It Heralds the News

‘Distinguished Visitor to Speak’

The Woman Voter 6 March 1911:

The (British) weekly newspaper, ‘Votes for Women’... tells its readers that a ‘Distinguished Visitor to Speak’ at the Albert Hall meeting in London on 23rd March is the well-known Australian, of whom it gives the following paragraph:

Miss Vida Goldstein, who is coming to England from Australia specially to address this meeting, is president of the Women’s Political Association of Victoria. It was under her leadership that the women of Victoria finally won in 1908, and it will be remembered that, though Victoria was the last of the five States of Australia to obtain full woman suffrage, yet the women’s victory in all other States and even in New Zealand is generally attributed in no small measure to the splendid agitation which the women of Victoria have carried on for twenty years.

Miss Vida Goldstein is a speaker of great power, as well as an active and keen worker. She has twice been nominated by the Melbourne Women’s Political Association for a seat in the Senate. On the first occasion, in 1903, she polled 51,497 votes; on the second, in 1910, she polled 53,000. Her election address last year dealt with national questions, and with the importance of equalising many of the laws between men and women. It was printed nearly in full in ‘Votes for Women.’ We are very grateful to Miss Goldstein for promising to come all this way to address us.*

*Barbara Caine: Goldstein was an obvious choice when the Women's Social & Political Union was looking around for women from other countries to give their campaign a hand... [She was] the leader of the women's suffrage movement in Victoria from the 1890s-1908 and was well known both in Australia and overseas. www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09612029300200033

Manifesto by the President (Vida Goldstein)

The Woman Voter 6 March 1911:

Fellow Members, On the eve of my departure for England, to assist in the Woman Suffrage Campaign which is being conducted with a collective statesmanship, heroism, and self-sacrifice unparalleled in any previous struggle for political liberty, I wish to emphasise some points in connection with our work for the coming year.

As always, the WPA will take every opportunity of pressing the claims of the home, of women and children on the attention of public bodies, but we intend to concentrate our energies in working for: A Federal Equal Marriage and Divorce Law; Raising the Age of Consent to 21;* Equal Pay for Equal Work; [Equal] Moral Education of the Young.

The winning of these reforms would mean that wives and mothers would have equal rights with husband and fathers in regard to Marriage, Divorce, and the Custody and Guardianship of Children; that a girl's person would have the same protection as the law now gives her property; that men and women would work on equal terms as breadwinners, efficiency, not sex being the basis of remuneration, and that our children would be surrounded by moral safeguards.

The social and industrial misery caused by the existing laws on these subjects is so widespread that we urge our members to give at least one half-day a month in helping to educate the electors on the reforms mentioned.

**Geraldine: The WPA succeeded in having the age of consent raised from 14 to 18 but not to 21.*



Great Suffragette Demonstration in London

Front row from Australia —
Mrs Fisher, Mrs McGowan & Miss
Vida Goldstein

National Library of Australia

Barbara Caine (cont.): Goldstein exemplified the privileged place of Australian women at this time, visiting England for a few months in 1911 as a guest of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). On her arrival, she was immediately catapulted into the centre of the militant campaign, travelling the length and breadth of the country to give speeches.

Woman Suffrage—Big Albert Hall Meeting, London, 1911` Miss Goldstein and Moonshine

Sydney Morning Herald, 25 March 1911:

London 24 March: At a meeting under the auspices of the Women's Social and Political Union in the Albert Hall last night, the building was crowded, and £6000 was subscribed to the campaign fund.

Miss Vida Goldstein, of Victoria, in a speech, said that Australia sympathised with the militant policy of the union. The women of Australia, she said, had suffered severely because of the bad educational and industrial conditions of the Commonwealth, and one of their main ideas in demanding the vote was to save their children from a similar fate. She declared that it was all moonshine to say that the women's vote had no effect on the economic status of women. Directly the suffrage was granted to women, equal pay for equal work was provided for by the Commonwealth law.*

*(Years later Vida told me within a year or so of passing of the Public Service Act the equal pay clause was quietly removed from it with hardly a protest from women. (Leslie M Henderson)

Welcome [Back Home] to Miss Goldstein

The Woman Voter 11 March 1912:

The welcome to Miss Goldstein was an unqualified success. Mrs Lavender, MA presided, and Miss Goldstein responded to the warm greeting accorded to her by delivering a most interesting address on 'Suffragists, Suffragettes and Antis' which brought vividly before the audience the historic events in the English campaign of 1911. Miss Goldstein spoke at electric speed for over two hours and still the audience wanted more.

Back Home—Petitions to the British Parliament

The Woman Voter 10 June 1912:

WPA Resolutions — That Australian non-party women appeal to the British Government to cease punishing as criminals women who are seeking just rights, to liberate the leaders, and to grant equal suffrage with men, thus being true to Liberal principles and ideals, and removing the cause of women's rebellion.

Petition—To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled. The humble Petition of the Women's Organisations of the Commonwealth of Australia respectfully sheweth:—

We, representatives of the enfranchised women of Australia, intercede on behalf of our enfranchised sisters in the United Kingdom, with the plea, that Honourable Members shall direct the Government to introduce and pass into law, a measure to enfranchise the women of your country on equal terms with men.

In the Australian Commonwealth, and in the six different States, the opponents of woman suffrage voiced the same objections, the same fears,

the same prophecies of failure, and disaster of a very serious nature, not only to Australia but to the whole British Empire, if our women were allowed to become part of the body politic, as are voiced in England today.

Experience has falsified them all, and at every election, our women cast their votes with an intelligence and discrimination, not surpassed by the men electors.

Experience teaches us also, that social and economic subjection of women by legislation, in whose enactment women have no voice, intensifies the social and economic subjection of men, and is against the highest interests of the State. In the name of democracy, which knows neither class nor sex, we plead for the enfranchisement of our sisters.

And your petitioners ever pray.

Vida Goldstein, 28 June 1912, selling the British suffrage paper *Votes for Women* in Flinders Street, Melbourne, on her return from Britain.



Geraldine: It wasn't only the British 'Votes for Women' that women in the WPA sold on the streets.

At this time 'Miss Goldstein, Miss Kilkelly, Miss Beatrice Warden, Miss Iolanthe Scanlan, Mrs Paling, Mrs Larcher, Mrs Wheeler and Miss Colley' were also recognised for selling the Australian WPA publication the 'Woman Voter' in the streets of Melbourne.

T Humphrey & Co. photographer,
Maurice Blackburn papers, State Library of Victoria (SLV)

Compulsory Military Training of Boys

The Woman Voter 17 June 1913:

To the Editor,

Miss Goldstein's frank and courageous statements as to the evils of compulsory military training for boys won her many votes from those who, like myself, disagreed with certain planks in her platform, but who nevertheless were and are prepared to make militarism as embodied in the Defence Act a test question at Federal Elections.

Yours etc., Leighton Richards

The Woman Voter 5 August 1913:

On Monday 11th and 18th the WPA will meet... to discuss the above problem. On the 11th Rev Leighton Richards and Mr Barry, representing the Australian Freedom League, will oppose, and the following week Mr Blackburn LLB will defend the system. This question is of vital importance to women, and we ask them to make a point of attending both meetings to hear both sides.

Geraldine: The WPA held a series of meetings and decided to oppose compulsory military training.

Miss Rose Scott and Militancy

The Woman Voter 2 September 1913:

To the Editor of the 'Woman Voter'

Dear Editor,

I am heartily with you in your contention against the Compulsory Military Training Act, and with your words, 'We consider women must be messengers of love and peace.'

Their motto [is] 'On earth, peace, goodwill toward man.' But how do you reconcile this attitude with your defence of the militant tactics in England? Surely if militancy is wrong and opposed to the teaching of Jesus Christ, the

militant suffragettes in England are wrong, and are very far from preaching 'Peace and goodwill to men'.

As one who has worked for the vote for women, and been in touch with all who have won that cause, no-one can regret more than I do the mistaken and harmful tactics of that minority in England who think the vote can be gained by physical violence.

Let us hope wise counsel will prevail.

Yours, etc., Rose Scott

WPA's Reply to Miss Rose Scott

The Woman Voter 2 September 1913:

We are sorry to differ from our good friend, Miss Rose Scott, on any question. We do not see any inconsistency in the attitude of those who oppose military training, and yet defend the policy of the suffragettes.

Militancy with the object of taking life, and militancy with the object of saving life, are very different things. The taking of life to settle international disputes is unnecessary.

The destruction of property to secure the means of saving women and children from physical degradation should be unnecessary, but when men legislators not only do not attempt to save women and children from a fate worse than death, but introduce legislation and bolster up conditions that press more and more heavily upon them, then our English sisters are forced to choose between two evils.

It is not a case of doing evil that good may come. It is a case of choosing between the evil of destroying property, or permitting the hourly destruction of the bodies of women and children.

No lives have been lost in the Women's War save the lives of women themselves...

Ed. 'WN'

ODD JOBS

by Anonymous

The Woman Voter 1 July 1911:

What can a helpless woman do?

Rock the cradle and bake and brew,

Or if no cradle the house afford,

Rock your brother's wife's for your board.

Save men's time by doing their praying,

And other jobs there's no present pay in.

But if you presume to usurp employment,

Reserved by them for their special enjoyment,

Or if you succeed when they knew you wouldn't,

Or earn money fast when they said you couldn't,

Or learn to do things they'd proved were above you,

You hurt their feelings and they won't love you.

(Verses written at least 20 years ago, and sent to 'Votes for Women' by a correspondent who does not know the name of the author.)

Equal Pay for Equal Work

The Woman Voter 11 July 1912:

The most significant victory the move for equal pay for equal work in private employment has gained is the decision by Mr Justice Higgins,⁷ in the Commonwealth Arbitration Court... The Judge saw clearly that, where a man and a woman did exactly the same work, the pay should be equal, but he failed to see the full significance of our demand when he inferred that a blacksmith and a nurse girl were not entitled to the same minimum wage.

The Woman Voter 10 September 1912:

Yet another victory for Equal Pay for Equal Work! The Clerks' Wages Board has made its first award on this basis, and we heartily congratulate the Clerks' Union on the firm stand it made for the principle from the beginning of the negotiations... The WPA has decided to invite delegates from all women's societies, professions and trades to co-operate with it in carrying on a special equal pay for equal work campaign.

The Woman Voter 9 October 1912:

Our special campaign for Equal Pay for Equal Work is getting under way. We intend to give immediate support to the Women State School Teachers in their demand for the reform.

The Woman Voter 11 December 1912:

A challenge to the Minister for Education — At the Equal Pay for Equal Work debate held on 2nd December the Chairman, Miss Goldstein referred to the fact that the State Government was one of the worst sweaters of women, and instanced the position in the education department... The Minister said that the women were not now underpaid... and that no Government would grant equal pay for equal work.

⁷ Justice Higgins: 'Is it right this court should aid the gentle invaders?' Vida's niece Leslie Henderson advised that Justice Higgins had used Vida's social and industrial poverty surveys in the 1907 Harvester Judgement.

The Life and Work of Vida Goldstein

The Woman Voter 9 January 1913:

The Clerks' Wages Board determination came into operation on the 3rd and the wholesale dismissal of competent women clerks, typists, and stenographers that were prophesied have not taken place.

Equal Pay in 1914

The Woman Voter 17 February 1914:

Our demand is for equal pay to be made the law of the land in all callings where men and women work together. The State elections take place at latest in October. Equal pay will then be made a test question, and the Government will be called upon to adopt equal pay throughout the public service.

The Woman Voter 14 July 1914:

The Clerks' Wages Board has again declared for Equal Pay, but the following clerks are exempted from the determination: Those employed by banking companies, insurance companies, building societies, friendly societies, trustee companies, barristers and solicitors, who are the most severely sweated of all clerks.

Megan McMurphy, Margot Oliver, Jeni Thornley:

In 1914 the Victorian Lady Teachers' Association applied for equal pay, only to be told in detail why their work was not equal to that of male teachers, and that the cost of living was less for women, anyway! ... One area of employment women did enter in increasing numbers was office work. They became clerks, secretaries, 'type-writers' bookkeepers and accountants, frequently filling places left by enlisted men. Women had already worked in office jobs before the war, so their presence in offices was apparently not regarded as a problem. There was, however, the question of their rates of pay ... The Clerk's Union 1916 application for equal pay was rejected.

For Love or Money a pictorial history of women and work in Australia Penguin 1981

Geraldine: In 1919 women's rate of pay was set at 54% of men's earnings.

Employers of Sweated Labour and its Supporters Responsible for the White Slave Traffic

The Woman Voter 10 March 1913:

Mr Shaw maintains that the White Slave Traffic will never be eliminated until women are protected from vice by the ability to earn a decent livelihood in a decent way...

Some women are saved from the streets by their husbands' or their fathers' wages, but there are always orphans and widows and girls from the country and abroad who have no families and no husbands to support them. Thus the woman's strength and energy are maintained by what she earns in the street, and used in making dividends for rich shareholders, who clamour to have public attention distracted from their complicity...

You, humble reader, who are neither a shareholder nor a landlord, do you thank God that you are guiltless in this matter?

Take care... The wages of prostitution are stitched into your buttonholes and into your blouse, pasted into your matchboxes and your boxes of pins, mixed with the paint on your walls, and stuck between the joints of your water pipes...

And what... is being offered the girls in return for giving up the streets? A pious refuge for the fallen; a place which is, as likely as not, to combine in a single establishment the rapacity of the sweater's den, the cruelty of the prison, and the moral reprobation that makes self-respect impossible.

From the frying pan into the fire is not much of a rescue. There is only one remedy, and one alone... for the White Slave Traffic.

Make it impossible, by the enactment of a minimum wage law and by proper provision for the unemployed, for any woman to be forced to choose between prostitution and penury, and the White Slaver will have no more power over the daughters of labourers, artisans, and clerks than he (or, under the new Act, she) has over the wives of bishops.



<https://queensarchives.wordpress.com/tag/international-woman-suffrage-congress-budapest-1913/>

The Woman Voter 24 June 1913:

Miss Goldstein was invited to send a message to the International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA), which met last week at Budapest.

Message to the International Woman Suffrage Alliance by Vida Goldstein

During the last few years strong opinions on the relation of woman suffragists to party organisations and to party politics have been expressed and acted upon by suffragists in every country... I ask the IWSA to allow me to act as plaintiff in an imaginary suit against our friends who urge that suffragists should ally themselves with party organisations...

In my opinion... danger to the woman movement, and danger to the larger human interests for which we stand, follows inevitably from any party affiliation. I say this... based on our Australian experience... In each of the six States the woman suffrage movement was led by women... The pressure came always from the non-party women suffragists...

Since we won the vote our experience has been exactly the same. Party women join the men's parties, or form separate women's organisations. They adopt the men's platform, and in a few cases they have added some 'women's planks,' but neither in the party conferences nor on the public platform do they take a stand for the women's movement...

We cannot serve two masters. We cannot serve the god of party and the principles of truth, and justice, and love at the same time...

Though I cannot join the discussion on this question at the Conference I hope the Alliance will say to all women who have accepted or would accept membership in the party organisations 'Come out from among them and be ye separate.'

7th International Suffrage Congress at Budapest, 15th June, 1913



Mrs Catt's Address

(President, International Woman Suffrage Alliance.)

The Woman Voter 2 September 1913:

The period which has elapsed since the last Congress has been one of phenomenal growth of our movement... Now, nine years later, with the exception of the Spanish American republics, there are in the entire world only seven constitutionally organised independent nations without an organised woman suffrage movement. Only three of these are in Europe, namely, Greece, Spain, and the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg. The remaining four are the Negro Republic of Liberia in Western Africa, Turkey, and Persia, which are not well-established self-governing nations, and Japan, which is still more autocratic than democratic.

Eastern Women Wake Up — Tomorrow we shall admit to membership the National Chinese Woman Suffrage Association, and the standard of the Alliance will then be set on five continents. Twenty five nations and two additional countries without full national rights will be counted in its membership. Organised groups also exist on many islands of the seas, among them being Java, Sumatra, the Philippine and Hawaiian Islands.

Truly this is a good record for our Alliance, which has only been at work for nine years. Like Alexander the Great, we shall soon be looking for other worlds to conquer! Following the familiar boast of the British Empire, we may with truth say that the sun never sets on the Woman Suffrage Alliance. The North Star and the Southern Cross alike cast their benignant rays upon woman suffrage activities...

It is reported of every land that there are more meetings, larger audiences, more speakers, more writers, more money, more influential candidates, more space in the press, more favourable editorials, more earnest supporters in Parliaments, more members, more and better organisation, and, best of all, more consecration — unflinching signs of the growing power of a great movement.

7th International Suffrage Congress at Budapest, 15th June, 1913

Mrs Catt's Address, concluded.

The Woman Voter 9 September 1913:

Since the last Congress your president accompanied by Dr Aletta Jacobs, president of the National Suffrage Association of the Netherlands, has made a tour around the world...

The tangible results of our trip are that we are connected with correspondents representing the most advanced development of the woman's movement in Egypt, Palestine, India, Burmah, China, Japan, Sumatra, Java, and the Philippine and Hawaiian Islands, and also in Turkey and Persia, which we did not visit...

Rebellion in the hearts of women: To gain a clear idea of the woman's movement in the midst of this confusion is no easy task... The women of the Orient have never been the satisfied, contented sex the world has believed them. Authors, European and Oriental, have declared that women of this or that Eastern nation were the happiest in the world. Men said so, and we believed them. It was never true...

There has been rebellion in the hearts of women all down the centuries... Whoever attempts to estimate the force and meaning of the awakening East without reckoning upon the influence of women will fall far short of the truth.

International Alliance hears of Two More Victories

The Woman Voter 23 September 1913:

The 2800 delegates to the Congress of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, full of joy over the five suffrage gains since the congress of 1911, were further elated by the announcement at Vienna and Budapest of two more victories. At Vienna they heard that full womanhood suffrage had been granted to the women of Norway, to whom in 1907 had been given limited suffrage. At Budapest cheers rent the air when the great victory in Illinois was announced.

WAR PREPAREDNESS BEGETS WAR

Australian Women! Wake Up! Make War Against War.



We War Against War

The Woman Voter, 11 November 1913:

What are Australian women doing in the interests of International Peace? Some of us have it on our political platforms, but that is no good unless we are prepared to *do* something for it. Indeed, we must plead guilty to a charge of wicked neglect of our opportunities in this direction. We have the vote, and yet we have allowed ourselves to be ensnared, to be mesmerised by the cry of 'if you want peace, prepare for war.'

If the women of the world are not going to unite in a demand for international peace, the men who are doing their best in this cause may well despair. Let Australian women begin by insisting that our boys shall not be educated and trained in the war spirit; that, if we are to have a system of defence, it shall be carried out only by the age of 21... that no-one shall be compelled to subscribe to our defence system in violation of their conscience...

Let us lose no opportunity of making war against war... Let us make this a fighting plank of our platform, instead of a matter of academic discussion.

Race of Armaments—A Ministry of Peace

The Woman Voter 17 March 1914:

Every country is trying to get ahead of the other in the matter of armaments. The war department is the department of every government... Let us have our department of Peace, as well as our War department.

'PEACE TALK!'

by Doris Blackburn

The Woman Voter 1 March 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?

Dare we talk peace? Yes! Talk and sing and shout it.
Thunder it, mighty oceans, on your shores.
Breathe it through all the world, oh, winds of heaven.
God give us peace, yes peace in honour's cause.

from ‘Fellowship’

Compulsory Military Training

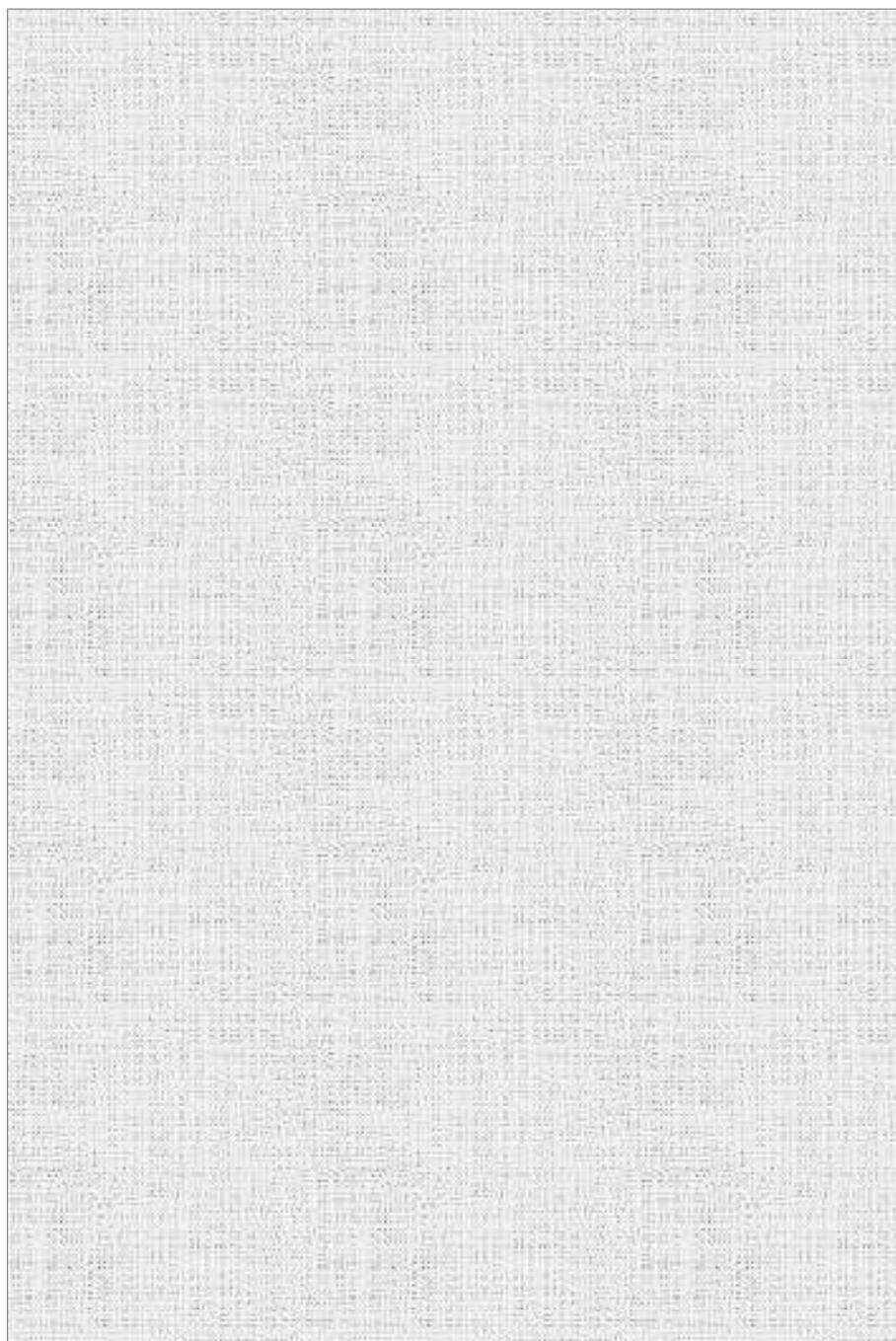
The Woman Voter 6 January 1914:

We are adversely criticised in certain quarters because we have opened our columns to discussion of certain features of the Defence Act, which are objectionable to all good democrats, whether they uphold Compulsory Military Training or not.

As the system is a highly controversial question of party politics, the WPA does not range itself on the one side or the other. Members are free to express what opinions they like upon the subject, but in joining the WPA they have accepted its platform, which includes 'International Peace and Arbitration' and it is expected of them that they shall lose no opportunity of preaching the gospel of peace, instead of the gospel of war.

Because universal peace seems to some a long way off, there are peace lovers amongst us who see no inconsistency in supporting Compulsory Military Training, so that our nation may be prepared to defend itself from attack; but we are conscious of in that attitude — the danger which has already manifested itself of being mesmerised by a sense of the inevitability of war, and losing sight of the necessity for striving always to hold the peace ideal before our people.

As an association we say neither 'Yea' nor 'Nay' to Compulsory Military Training, but as an association we have always protested against youths under 21 coming under the Act, against anyone being compelled to train in violation of his conscience, and against the class distinctions which have grown up under the system in drilling the sons of the well-to-do during school hours and the sons of the working men in their leisure time.



PART 2

THE FIRST WORLD WAR (1914-1918)

Geraldine: On the 4th August 1914, with Australia declaring full support, Britain declared war on Germany. Vida Goldstein was standing for Parliament at the time. She was the founder and President of the Women's Political Association (WPA), the editor and owner of its paper, the Woman Voter (1908-1919).



Vida Goldstein: I believe that war is a degradation of motherhood, an economic futility and a crime against civilisation and humanity. I therefore pledge myself to active service in the cause of peace by working against compulsory military training and every form of militarism.

Further, I solemnly pledge myself to face unflinchingly adverse criticism and persecution for my faith that love and justice alone will bring peace to the world.

www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/summerfeatures/

The War—Women's Part

The Woman Voter, 4 August 1914, the day war was declared:

This must be the last war between civilised peoples. The woman movement, which is growing in every nation, will force upon Governments the necessity of finding other means of settling international disputes.

It is awful enough that millions of men are standing face to face with violent death. It is more awful that all the rest of the people of the world are in danger of death by starvation. The food supplies of the world must cease when the hands that sow and reap are occupied in the work of slaying men. Instead of the highways of the world bringing foodstuffs, they are given up to carrying the means of bloodshed and death.

The millions that war costs must be paid ultimately, and by the weakest, and these are the women and children of the working classes, who will pay with hunger and cold and cruel deprivations.

There is no real cause for this war! Great Britain has no quarrel with Austria, France none with Germany or Russia. Do we not owe to every European nation, and they to us, the advance in art and learning that should make everyone happier and more complete?

It is because every nation has been armed to the teeth, and the ideal of war has been before them so long: because the value of life has been obscured, that this terrible disaster, when all the evil forces of hatred, greed and violence are to be let loose, has fallen upon us.

Women know the cost of life too well to risk it lightly.

Shall the Mothers of Men 'Rejoice?' Shall they not rather weep?

The Woman Voter, 11 August 1914, [a week after war was declared](#):

The reports from Europe which reach us lead us to suppose that Britain and her allies have been victorious over the German arms. Twenty-five thousand German casualties are reported, though it is denied that there has as yet been a naval engagement of importance.

Our own losses and those of the nations allied with us are not reported.

The press asks us to rejoice over these victories over the 25,000 men who have paid the price of human hate and human greed.

We cannot rejoice in the victory without, at the same time, applauding the carnage. We must pay for victory with death.

The thunder of shot and shell, the shouts of victory cannot drown, in women's ears, the wailing of children left fatherless in a stricken country.

Not all the bands and banners, not all the patriotic demonstrations, or the pride of conquest can make us forget that for every man who lies dead on the field of battle, or mutilated and dying in the hospitals, represents for his father and mother their pain and love, their toil and care, and their humanity — the hope and promise of the future...

Why and wherefore? And all for what? The wisest apologists for this war can only tell us that Germany must be crushed because she and her military oligarchy threaten European liberty and peace.

We may indeed crush Germany but are we then to see the end of military tyranny? We know that by carrying our campaign to victory, we shall crush the German peasant who gives us food, the German artisan who makes our clothing, the German student who, in art and science and music, could do much to make life full and happy for all the world.

We know that by starvation and by dire poverty we can crush the German women, the mothers and the young girls, and the little German children upon whom the future depends. But are we sure that with an impoverished industrial population, militarism will be destroyed?

Crush German arms and we exalt a much more complete system of tyranny, that of Russia. Within the last twenty years, Russia has destroyed completely and ruthlessly the independence of two highly civilised nations, Poland and Finland...

The Czar and his agents, to increase the power of the executive, deliberately stir up race hatred and there exists in Russia an institution called the 'Pogrom' whereby the ignorant people are incited at Easter time to attack the Jews, who are massacred in the hundreds.

Special enactments are enforced against the Jews, and these are carried out with the utmost severity. The laws against Jewish people are having the effect claimed for them in 1891, that 'one-third would be converted, one

third would emigrate, and one third would die of starvation.’ Let us not be blinded by the excuse that this is a war for liberty. We shall curb one autocracy only to give power to another, still more dangerous, and we are fastening upon all the European workers a debt of countless millions and the burden of famine and disease which war brings in its train.

This Association Protests against the European War

This association protests against the European War as an outrage on civilisation, and pledges itself to carry on a campaign of education, in the interests of peace through international arbitration.

The Collapse of Peace

The Woman Voter 5 October 1914:

Those who fight militarism with increased armaments and conscription are the friends of militarism. The European war proves that men cannot be trusted with the guardianship of the race. For popularity, from cowardice, from muddleheaded sentimentality, they are prepared to sacrifice it. Whatever is to be done, women must do, for they alone put the true value on human life.

Two Questions Answered by Adela Pankhurst

The Woman Voter 13 October 1914:

Now war has come upon us, how can we bring it to an end? Do we want our country to win or lose? These two questions are constantly put to us by those who, hating war, yet believe it to be inevitable.

Breakdown of Democratic Government — In reply, we say that our helplessness to stay the brutal conflict proves the breakdown of democratic government where the party system prevails.

Suppression of Facts — We know that had certain facts not been suppressed by the military censor, and statements by leading men and women distorted by the newspapers, Australians would hold a very different view of what is taking place.

At such a crisis we do not expect very much of prominent politicians, for we know that they cannot move ahead of public opinion without wrecking their party. We do not look to them for help. Experience has proved that we must not hope to hear from the Christian clergy a plea for brotherly love or Christian forbearance or mercy.

Our Responsibility — But we can, ourselves, place before the people what war means to the soldiers who go out to fight, and to the mothers, wives and children who remain behind; what it means to the working people of the nation who engage in it, whether they win or lose in the struggle. For the people of every nation there will be no gain — only bitter loss. The acquisition of Samoa and New Guinea does not reconcile us to it.

If Germany's commerce was swept off the seas, and the British Empire monopolised the whole of her trade, it would not elate us, but rather cover us with humiliation. It would be a blow to our self-respect to think that we, as British people, had gained advantages from the wholesale slaughter of our enemies, and infliction of ruin and misery and worse upon their women.

What Conquest Means — We do not wish to possess an acre of German Territory, for in order to keep such a possession we would have to destroy the liberty of all the German subjects living in it, to embark upon a course of oppression and cruelty towards those whose only fault is that they love their country as much as we love ours.

The history of Ireland has taught us what such conquest means... Since we do not want territory ourselves, why should we be dragged at the heels of Russia and France and Japan to help them in their conquests?

The Real Need — The working people of all those countries will have to pay the bills, and will get no benefit from it. Russia is quite big enough to hold all her people. They want better Government, easier industrial and agricultural conditions, fewer taxes for militarism, more education, not more territory and more fellow subjects to share the tyranny under which they live.

France has a huge, expensive, corrupt army, and her people, too, want better Government and fewer soldiers. The same is true of Japan. German people, in spite of the daily press reports, are more opposed to foolish conquest than any of their neighbours. The majority of them have been struggling too hard for democratic government for themselves to want to invade England or anywhere else.

Arbitration — Whatever matters are in dispute can be settled by arbitration. We can help to force our Government to agree to that. We must work strenuously towards a state of affairs under which not Czars, nor Kings, but the people rule.

We must try to soften racial and religious bitterness, and to show that patriotism does not consist of loving our country and hating our enemies, but in proving our superiority in better ways than fighting.

War proves nothing except which country is the stronger in battleships and guns, which can be bought with money, and we believe that the nation which spends more money on education than on armaments will ultimately outstrip the rest.

Women and Militarism

The Woman Voter 3 November 1914:

An anti-militarist does not necessarily believe in non-resistance. It is an uncivilised method of carrying on Government, to kill and maim the men of the country and starve the women and children in order to gain dominion over the country in which they live.

Masculine Logic

Woman Voter 3 June 1915:

Nearly 5,000 Australians have been killed or wounded at Gallipoli, fighting against the Turks. One result of their death and suffering will be to establish Russia in Constantinople.

THE TARGETS

by Mary Fullerton

The Woman Voter 5 October 1914:

All over the world the women
In travail by night and day;
Are bringing to life the targets
For the day when the monarchs fight.

All over the world the women
Think they are rearing men,
So they and the failing fathers
Shall live in their youth again.

In many a cot the woman,
With the babe on her shelt'ring breast,
Is nursing his limbs for battle
A-crooning her son to rest...

Soul is too great for target,
The life for a tyrant's pawn;
No more is the unit only
A parcel of muscle and brawn.

All over the world the toilers
Have travelled the god to birth;
And we who died for the despot
Shall live for the fruitful earth.

For the lamp in the soul is lighted,
And the clarion loudly rings:
'No more be the patient people
The target of bloody kings.'

Might the Only Right?

Vida Goldstein:⁸ I feel impelled to make an appeal to you because I know the depth of feeling that has been aroused by the attempt to conscript the lives of Australian men, by the gradual but steady loss of the great Bulwarks of Liberty; a Free Conscience, Free Press, Free Speech... Now we are not governed by laws made by Parliament but by regulations made by military men... The nation that stifles conscience, even in a time of war, proves that might is the only right.

Freedom of the Press and Civil Liberty

The Woman Voter 16 September 1914:

Military Censorship — The blank pages in last week's issue of 'The Woman Voter' show that our paper has come under the ban of the military censor...



Our civil liberty and the freedom of the press are in jeopardy, and we are prepared to fight for both... On 9th instant an armed guard, with fixed bayonets, a commanding officer, a detective, and police, took charge of the establishment of our printers, Messrs Fraser and Jenkinson... seized the first prints of the 'Woman Voter' and the correspondence etc referred to above

⁸ For more on this, listen to the Melbourne Theatre Company's 'Great Australian Speeches' www.mtc.com.au/discover-more/mtc-now/vida-goldsteins-open-letter-to-parliament/

was destroyed. We are told that we may publish anything that will 'stimulate military enthusiasm' which is explained by the 'Military Journal' as developing a 'desire to kill.'

The 'Woman Voter' is the only paper that has even attempted to make a fight for civil liberty, and we urge you to help us in that fight.

Open Letter to the Women of Australia—Censorship

The Woman Voter 29 September 1914:

Dear Women of Australia, dear women of every shade of political and religious thought, come and let us reason together about war, the present war and war in general. But first let me tell you what has recently happened to us in this free Australia of ours.

International Peace and Arbitration is one of the planks of our programme. When we put a subject in our platform it is not put there for show case or dress parade purposes — it is put there because we believe in it as a fundamental principle of our policy. It is not there to be spoken of only in the piping times of peace, and put away in cold storage as soon as war breaks out.

Immediately when war was declared we cleared the decks of our little Peace Dreadnought and prepared for action.

We passed a resolution regretting that the statesmanship of nations had failed to maintain peace, and asking the President of the International Woman Suffrage' Alliance to call upon the women of all affiliated countries to demand peace, and the submission of the points in dispute to arbitration. We published articles against war...

On September 23rd we received communication from the Military Censor informing us that the 'Woman Voter' of 25th August and 2nd September contained 'matter that should not have been published,' and enclosing a copy of 'instructions to press'. These instructions referred only to cables, cargoes, movements of warships and troops, sensational reports of victories or defeats, seditious, disloyal or contemptuous matter etc and we

were asked to give an assurance that we would loyally carry out these instructions. We believed, and believe, that we had not violated them in any way. We wrote to that effect to the censor and asked specifically if it were not possible to plead in our paper for love and peace to reign instead of hatred and bloodshed...

The censor could not meet us on this ground but persisted in saying that we must not publish anything that was not calculated to 'stimulate military enthusiasm.' We replied that we did not think the commandment 'Thou shall not kill' was likely to 'stimulate military enthusiasm' and we would teach that in season and out of season!

The next morning, when we went up to the establishment of our printers, Messrs Fraser and Jenkinson, to 'make-up' that week's 'Woman Voter,' we were greeted by an armed guard with fixed bayonets, a commanding officer, an officer in mufti and a detective! ...

We have already given you sufficient to prove that every nation without exception has made such egregious blunders in its foreign policy that war was inevitable; that the war has been made by monarchs, politicians, diplomats, armament firms, financiers, and newspapers; that alliances and ententes cordiales are so many powder magazines...

The Censor's staff told us that they had had more trouble with our little publication than with any other paper in Melbourne. Exactly. We opposed the censorship of articles that pleaded for peace and love instead, of war and hatred, not for the sake of opposition, but from an inward conviction that we were only doing what was demanded of us by conscience.

It was a fight for liberty, fought, not with weapons that take life, but those that give it. Life without freedom to choose the right is but a living death...

Now is the accepted time. Do not wait till after the war. Woman's hour has struck. The war makes that clear. Enfranchised women of Australia! History will claim you false to your trust if you are silent now!

Come out and be separate from all that makes for war. Vida Goldstein

WAR IS WOMEN'S BUSINESS

*Woman Voter:**

Who faces death in order to give life to men?

WOMEN

Who love and work to rear the sons who then are killed in battle?

WOMEN

Who plant fields and harvest crops when all able-bodied men are called to war?

WOMEN

Who keep shops and schools and work in factories while men are in the trenches?

WOMEN

Who nurses the wounded, feeds the sick, supports the helpless, braves all danger?

WOMEN

Who see their homes destroyed by shell and fire, their little ones made destitute, their daughters outraged?

WOMEN

Who are sent adrift, alone, no food, no hope, no shelter for the unborn child?

WOMEN

Who must suffer agony for every soldier killed?

WOMEN

Who dares to say that war is not women's business?

In the name of Justice and Civilisation give women a voice in Government and in the Councils that make or prevent war.

**Bruce Scates & Raelene Frances, Women & the Great War*

How to Make This the Last War

The Woman Voter 5 January 1915:

A Public meeting was held in the Athenæum by the Australian Peace Alliance... 'If you want peace, prepare for peace,' was the motto adopted by Miss Vida Goldstein, who occupied the chair...

She added that as long as the public applauded the soldiers going to the front, they would be regarded as patriots, but if they ventured to stand for peace principles, they would be accused of being pro-German. It took more courage to advocate peace principles than to cheer the soldiers. Miss Adela Pankhurst, representing the Women's Political Association, moved the following resolution:

This meeting calls upon the Federal Parliament to make representations to the Imperial Government, urging it to establish real parliamentary control over foreign policy, and to prevent it again being shaped in secret and forced upon the country as an established fact.

The Women's Political Association Created the Women's Peace Army

The Woman Voter 15 July 1915:

A large and enthusiastic meeting was held at the WPA rooms on the 8th, Miss Vida Goldstein presiding, to form a Women's Peace Army. Miss Goldstein said that the time had come to solidify the forces of women in Australia who opposed war, all wars, past, present and future. Recognising that those who support party politics might not feel themselves able to join the WPA, it was considered wise to enlarge our borders by forming a Women's Peace Army, to which all sections of people could belong.

Although making its direct appeal to women, as the mothers of the race, membership would not be confined to women. The Peace Army would be a fighting body, and would fight for the destruction of militarism with the same spirit of self-sacrifice as soldiers showed on the battlefield.

The War and the Rights of Citizens

The Woman Voter 20 January 1916:

The Government made war without consulting the people, and the people were not responsible therefore for the outbreak of hostilities. But, in continuing the war, we do become responsible for every drop of blood that is shed. We are responsible, also, to the future people for the conditions of the country we must leave to them. A debt of hundreds of millions is accumulating while our most capable producers, the young and active men, are being slaughtered on the field of battle.

We have just witnessed a horrible, bloody bungle in the Dardanelles, and still the Government declines to outline the terms upon which peace can be negotiated, or in what fields they will be pleased to have our manhood slain. Yet there are still some people who call the peace advocates unpatriotic! Surely it would be a crime to be silent while such fearful outrage against humanity as this war continues...

We have tried our best to warn the people of the evils which were bound to come upon them, but we have failed to rouse them sufficiently to avert them. It is a poor comfort to be able to say 'We told you so' when poverty, disease, military rule and contract labour are actually with us... We must not relax our efforts.

The Prime Minister Mr Hughes Incites to Murder

The Woman Voter 27 January 1916:

Mr Hughes has left his unfortunate country to drag on as best it can until he returns in May. Yet, according to him, matters are in a serious state. The Labour movement is attacked by a body of men who, like leeches, are sucking at its vital parts, these persons — those who do not like the war — conscription, commercial exploitation, militarism... must be fallen upon with the 'ferocity of a Bengal tiger.' Such expressions from the Prime Minister are nothing short of incitements to murder. If the larrikins go so far as to kick someone to death, Mr Hughes will be responsible.

First International Peace Congress of Women, The Hague, 1915
WPA Letter to London

The Woman Voter 3 February 1916:

The Peace Army forwarded the following letter to the Prime Minister —

Hon. the Prime Minister of Australia, Commonwealth Offices, London.

Dear Sir, We send you herewith a copy of the terms which, in the opinion of the International Congress of Women, held at the Hague, April-May 1915 and of the Women's Peace Army of Australia, should form the basis of a constructive and permanent peace.

It has seemed incredible to us that our elected representatives in the Commonwealth Parliament should have so far failed in their duty to the people as to permit you to leave Australia without any instructions as to the desires of the people in regard to peace terms and future military commitments without any mandate from the Parliament or the people. As women citizens we are not prepared to acquiesce in the silent departure of the Prime Minister for the purpose of giving further support to the evil system of Cabinet Ministers making secret decisions...

With all courtesy and respect we consider it is our plain duty to tell you that we, speaking for the great majority of all true democrats of our country, as we know from public meetings, the democratic press and correspondence, dissociate ourselves entirely from the cruel, relentless, undemocratic, anti-Christian policy of Militarism and Imperialism, which are synonymous terms, to which Australia is being committed by the Government, the press, and the financiers of the country...

We enclose the Peace Terms of the International Congress of Women, which have been adopted by the Women's Peace Army...

We ask you, Sir, although you will disagree wholly with our view point, to place it and our Peace Terms before the Imperial Conference, as representing, if not the majority, at least a very large minority of the people of Australia.

WPA Women's Terms of Peace

The Australian Women's Peace Army — Towards Permanent Peace,
Equality of rights and opportunities for Men and Women of ALL Nations.

Women's Peace Army platform:

1. Abolition of Conscription and Every Form of Militarism.
2. Women to be given Equal Political Rights with Men in all Countries where Representative Government Exists.
3. Education of Children in Principles of Anti-Militarism and Internationalism.
4. Self-Government Not to be Refused to Any People.
5. Respect for Nationality — No Territory to be transferred without the consent of the men and women in it. The right of conquest not to be recognised.
6. Foreign Policy to be Subject to Democratic Control.
7. General Disarmament to be aimed at by the Governments taking over the manufacture of the munitions of war and controlling International traffic in them.
8. Trade Routes to be open on equal terms to **the** shipping of all nations.
9. Investments to be made at the risk of the Investor, without claim to the official protection of his Government.
10. Secret Treaties to be void, and the theory of the Balance of **Power** to be abandoned.
11. Our Social System to be remodelled on a basis of co-operation, so that production and distribution shall be controlled by the people for the people.
12. International Disputes to be referred to an International Court of Justice, in which men and women of all classes shall be represented.
- [13. No declaration of war unless the people declare in favour of it by referendum.
14. Terms of Peace to be submitted to the electors.] (*Later WPA additions.*)

JOIN THE WOMEN'S PEACE ARMY NOW!'

Who Loses the War?

The Woman Voter 20 January 1916:

The men who lose their lives.

The women who lose their husbands, brothers and sons.

The children who lose their fathers.

The workers who lose their wages, who have to pay high rents and high prices.

The fathers who love their boys.

The mothers who have to go out and work too soon before and too soon after the boy's birth.

The child who goes to work instead of to school.

The babies who die from want and lack of mother's care, sacrificed to feed the fires of war.

The young girls who can never be wives and mothers.

The soldiers' widows and orphans who will starve on their pensions.

The nation which is robbed of its young men and unborn children.

All those who have brains to think and hearts to love humanity.

All these different classes of people who want the war to stop at once.

Are you one?

Who Profits by the War?

The Woman Voter

Broken Hill (Mining) Ltd. The report and balance sheet is commented on in the 'Argus' of 9th. Profit of £196,059 with £99,816 the previous half year.

Race Suicide

Woman Voter 11 March 1912:

Archdeacon Hindley and Dr Charles Bage tackled the above subject at St Paul's Cathedral on 25th February, and once more we have to deplore the misappropriation of scriptural teaching in declaring that children are always a 'gift that cometh from the Lord.'

It is revolting to think that criminal self-indulgence should be thus practically encouraged by the pulpit, for it is criminal to bring children into the world without any reasonable prospect of being able to give them their just rights of maintenance, education, and equipment for a healthy, independent life.

The number of parents who can give these elementary rights to six children (Dr Bage's 'proper average') is few indeed.

Disorderly Soldiers

The Woman Voter 12 January 1915:

We cannot congratulate the authorities on their methods in dealing with drunken and disorderly soldiers. The recent attack on the Chinese quarter in the City was a positive outrage, and the soldiers concerned, besides being severely punished, should have been compelled to pay the costs of repairing the damage done to the property of the residents.

Nurses' Quarters at Hospital for Insane, Yarra Bend

The Woman Voter 2 February 1915:

Some time ago money was voted for the purchase of building new quarters for the nurses... It was, however, spent on a building for the doctors. The nurses were told they could have the doctors' old quarters, but the matron and the housekeeper, who were already comfortably housed, decided they would take them for their own use. The nurses protested... We trust the Mental Hospital Employees' Association will obtain satisfaction for the nurses.

Anti-War Riot by Turkish Women

Woman Voter 9 February 1915:

The 'Times' says that refugees arriving at Tiflis report an extraordinary anti-war demonstration by Turkish women at Erzurum. The women threw stones and rioted for several hours, and when threatened by the guards rent their garments and paraded the streets almost in a state of nudity, compelling the guards to retire in obedience to Islamic law. They forced the Vali to despatch a telegram to Constantinople protesting the war.

Their fathers and grandfathers used to sing 'The Rooshians shan't have Constantinople,' and England (is) still paying the bill for a war to prevent the very thing we are running up a much bigger bill to accomplish.

'Women, Begone, and Breed'

The Woman Voter 2 March 1915:

MEF 'Oh, why this carnage, Lord and King, Oh, spare our sons, we plead.' The War Lord raised his regal hand. 'Women, begone, and breed.'

Vaccination

Woman Voter 16 September 1915:

Dr Robertson, chairman of the Board of Public Health, giving evidence before the Vaccination Commission last week, said he thought the individual should have some say as to whether to be vaccinated or not. As vaccination was a disease, it should not be forced upon a person.

Compulsory Treatment

The Woman Voter 28 October 1915:

Miss Goldstein spoke of the ravages of venereal disease amongst the soldiers, and quoted the remark of the members of the West Australian Government who had said 'Cairo would do more harm to Australia than the Turks at Gallipoli'. Miss Goldstein spoke of what the women in West Australia had done in protest against the attempt being made by the State

Government to meet the dangers of venereal disease with compulsory measures that were bound to defeat their object, and were the greatest insult and menace to women. She referred to the value of the night clinics established by the NSW Government, which some 25,000 patients had attended since March this year, with an average of 50 new patients weekly. Miss Goldstein urged the women of Victoria to be on guard against the introduction of compulsory measures in this State.

Our Soldiers

The Woman Voter 29 July 1915:

Trained Nurses for Soldiers — At long last the military authorities have consented to employ trained women nurses at the various camps. It is deplorable that it should have taken so long to secure this very necessary reform, and that so many sick soldiers should have had their sufferings increased unnecessarily owing to the lack of that care and attention and sympathy that are so essential to the sick...

The soldiers who go away are heroes; the wounded soldiers who return are a nuisance, to be bundled away to their homes, or to hospital, or to other States, as quickly as possible, regardless of comfort or provision of money or food.

The treatment metered out to wounded soldiers, and their nurses, who arrived by the 'Kyarra' ...was brought before the House. The response? 'The matter is being looked into.'

Return of Wounded Soldiers

The Woman Voter 12 August 1915:

Miss Goldstein lent her car last Friday to convey wounded soldiers from the 'Ballarat' for the Base Hospital. Miss John, who took the wheel, had three men under her care — one from Ballarat, one from Maryborough, and a French Interpreter. Naturally, Miss John asked no questions, but the men said their experiences had been horrible. They accepted them, however, as part of the game.

The Soldiers at Peace Meetings by Adela Pankhurst

The Woman Voter 6 January 1916:

After twelve months of incitement, the Jingo Press has persuaded the soldiers to adopt methods of violence towards those who oppose Conscription and desire an early Peace.

We believe that this is only a passing phase of our movement, and if there is any danger of serious disturbance, the Jingo Press will suffer from it, and not the pacifists. Our feelings towards the soldiers are of profound pity and respect — our desire is that they may receive generous treatment from the country they have defended with their blood.

Soldiers Attack Mr Katz and an Unknown Woman

The Woman Voter 6 January 1916:

A deplorable outrage was committed by returned soldiers and members of the Expeditionary Force upon Mr Katz, the secretary of the Clerks' Union. Upwards of 50 soldiers entered his office and, finding him defenceless, held him while hot tar was poured over his head and feathers spattered over him. The soldiers then kicked him down the stairs.

Presumably, Mr Katz's offence was in moving a resolution at the Trades Hall Council, advocating that unionists should ignore the inquisitorial questions on the... recruiting cards. Mr Katz, as the delegate of his union, was merely following out the instructions of that body, and the attack was therefore entirely unprovoked. A certain spite was felt... for his foreign sounding name, and this has been accentuated by press hints. We must therefore remind the public that these very newspapers have persons of German birth or descent connected with them, and it would be as reasonable for those persons... to be tarred and feathered... as Mr Katz...

Not content with their treatment of Mr Katz, the soldiers also rolled a woman in the tar lying on the floor, presumably because she was connected with him.

United Peace and Free Demonstration

Woman Voter 27 January 1916:

Some 20 progressive organisations have united to hold a demonstration on the Yarra Bank... We invite our readers to join the choir... sing appropriate songs, and to be present on this occasion, which we hope will be historic.

Peace Demonstration

The Woman Voter 10 February 1916:

On Sunday, January 20th the weather was most unfavourable. From early morning the rain poured down in torrents... an hour before the advertised time of the meeting did it clear enough to admit of the meeting being held. A crowd of 700 to 800 people assembled, [at the Yarra Bank] and a short meeting was held... About 100 soldiers were present... but there was no disturbance. The Rev F Lynch attempted to address the crowd after the meeting in favour of recruiting, but at a very early stage he lost his temper with an interjector, and, leaping from the platform, struck a violent blow at his face. The crowd were so incensed at this behaviour that they refused to allow him to continue, and he was compelled to leave the ground.

Yarra Bank Meeting

The Woman Voter 30 March 1916:

A densely-attended meeting was held under the auspices of the Women's Peace Army on the Yarra Bank on the 26th, Miss Vida Goldstein said that the soldiers were led to suppose that the Women's Peace Army were out to oppose the soldiers and dishonour them. The fact was that the Peace Army was composed of women who had always opposed war, but who honoured the soldiers for carrying out what they conceived to be their highest duty to their country. It was said that the Peace Army wanted 'peace at any price'. That was untrue; they wanted peace at a very high price — on terms that were definite and constructive. Because the press would not let the public know what those terms were, they would be set before the meeting, in the form of a resolution, on which they could express their opinion. In the

interests of fair play, the soldiers present would be given an opportunity, if they did not agree with the resolution, of speaking at a later stage.

About 100 soldiers had gathered around the improvised platform, and they manifested the same ugly spirit as at the Bijou Theatre. They had come to the meeting resolved to 'take it out of' the women in revenge for the statement reported in the press last week, that a speaker at the previous Sunday's meeting had called the soldiers 'murderers'.

'You called us murderers and assassins, and we won't let you speak', shouted a soldier waving a Union Jack, who turned out to be an Englishman, a Corporal Hogg.

'We did nothing of the kind,' replied Miss Goldstein.

'You did and you won't be allowed to speak.'

'What would you think of us if we condemned all the soldiers because of a few black sheep among you? Yet you condemn us because, possibly, someone in the crowd made the statement you complain of. Do you call that fair play?'

'We don't want fair play; we want a fight', shouted another soldier.

'We don't trust you', replied Hogg: and Clemence, who led the disturbance at the Bijou, mounted a barrel, and said 'I'll speak now'.

Hogg then jumped on the platform, and stood in front of Miss Goldstein, and used the vilest language towards her and Miss Pankhurst. Clemence said 'If anyone here would do to these women what the Germans did to the women in Belgium, I'd stand by and watch them do it with pleasure'.

The soldiers cheered. Not one of them, so anxious about protecting the women of Belgium, made the slightest effort to protect the women of their own country from insult. Instead, they tried to push Miss Goldstein off the platform and to pull away the planks on which she stood. But each time they surged forward Miss Goldstein faced them calmly and fearlessly, and they moved back. Mr F Riley stood behind Miss Goldstein to protect her, and one of the soldiers behind him said 'Let's get this __ mongrel out of the way, then we'll get her'.

Another then struck him violently on the head, a blow which was the signal for some thirty men to fasten on to Mr Riley and drag him away from the platform towards the river. Mr Riley hit out vigorously in self-defence and he was arrested for criminal behaviour! Clemence and Hogg called upon the crowd to throw him into the river.

Miss Goldstein then put the resolution to the meeting, which was incensed at the conduct of the soldiers, but fearful of being involved in a disturbance. The resolution was carried, and Miss Goldstein declared the meeting closed.

She, Miss John and Miss Pankhurst and a number of sympathisers then went to the police station to bail Mr Riley out. His face had been badly bruised and cut.

Recent peace meetings have been undisturbed.

The People Have Rejected Him

The Woman Voter 9 November 1916:

The power of the Prime Minister, the Minister for Defence, and the Minister for the Navy, is unchecked by any sort of parliamentary control.

So Mr Hughes Hopes

The Woman Voter 7 September 1916:

After keeping the public in suspense for 10 days, Mr Hughes has at last said the words 'Conscription is to Come'. Or at least so Mr Hughes hopes. But perhaps his confidence is not so great as many people suppose.

Anzacs' Vote?

The Woman Voter 9 November 1916:

The Women's Peace Army had a crowded meeting at the Guild Hall, [344 Swanston St. Melbourne] on 2nd, Miss Goldstein presided...

Miss Fullerton said the demand should go forth that the Anzacs' vote should be placed before the public. The number of 'Yes' votes would have

been negligible had not those who voted in the affirmative believed what they had been told by those in authority — that the soldiers were calling to them from the trenches. Mr Hughes had issued a manifesto to the soldiers in the trenches urging them to vote ‘Yes,’ but since they were supposed to be fighting desperately with one hand against the enemy and with the other beckoning to Australia to come and help them, why should it have become necessary to urge them to vote ‘Yes’? ...

Militarism Triumphant by Adela Pankhurst: Australia is in danger! Not from a foreign nation, but from falling into the slough of misery and oppression from which she can only emerge, in common with Europe, after long suffering...

We are suffering under an absolute dictatorship, and the fate, not only of this generation, but the whole of the Commonwealth, is being shaped by the power of one discredited individual — William Morris Hughes... The people have rejected him, and yet he is permitted to govern the people. He conducted the referendum campaign in a spirit of vindictive hatred towards those whom events have shown to be the majority of the people.

It is highly dangerous to permit him to make laws for those whom he has personally denounced.

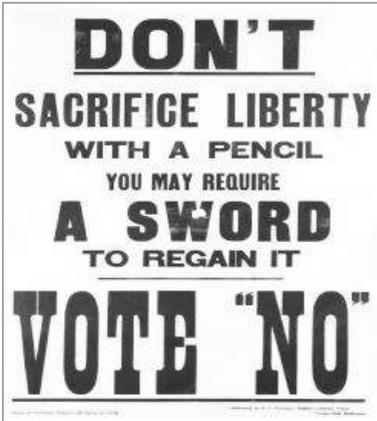
Conscription of Women

The Woman Voter 14 September 1916:

Mr Finlayson, MP, has given notice of motion that, for the preservation of health in time of peace and war, it is expedient... that a graded course of hospital and nursing training be made compulsory for all females between the ages of 16 and 22.

We are just as much opposed to this proposal as to the Conscription of life. Many girls are temperamentally and constitutionally unfitted to undergo hospital and nursing training.

No Conscription!



Australia's Day of Degradation—Special Appeal by Women to Women

The Woman Voter 5 October 1916:

Women of Australia! On October 28 we shall have laid upon us the greatest responsibility and the greatest privilege that could be placed upon women of any country. For the first time in history the people of a whole nation are being asked whether they shall declare their allegiance to the force of Might or the force of Right...

We ask you to be true to your womanhood and, with your vote, bring to the state the same gifts that you bring to your homes. The nations are dying for the lack of these gifts... You cannot give them if you vote for conscription. Therefore VOTE NO! Vida Goldstein

Women's Demonstration—Procession Meet at Guild Hall 1pm Sat. 21st

The Woman Voter 19 October 1916:

WOMEN'S PROCESSION — The Lord Mayor has granted permission to the United Women's No-Conscription Committee to have a procession from the Guild Hall to the Yarra Bank on Saturday afternoon. This procession will be historic; it will be the first occasion on which Australian women have proclaimed their faith by walking in procession, and we ask our friends to line up at the Guild Hall at 1pm on Saturday. Authorised by Vida Goldstein.

Between 4,000 and 6,000 Processionists

Woman Voter 26 October 1916:

The procession and demonstration by the United Women's No Conscription Committee was a supreme success. An ideal day, between 4,000 and 6,000 women processionists where only 2,000 had been hoped for, artistic tableaux and singing, a seething, sympathetic mass of onlookers along the route, a concourse 80,000 people on the Yarra Bank, earnest, thoughtful speeches, produces a demonstration of feeling such as has never before been witnessed in Australia.

There was nothing to mar its success except a few ugly, isolated attempts by a few soldiers of the hooligan type, who find their way into every army, to attack women and children who took part in the procession. And the pity of it! So desperate is the Press in its efforts to foster conscription in Australia that mendacity and malice of the most venomous kind were employed to make those who could not see the proceedings believe that violence and rioting were the chief features.

The meanest and most cowardly were used by the 'Age,' which concluded its account by saying: 'It was significant that, following in the rear of the procession, were men engaged in selling 'Direct Action' ... of the IWW.

Miss Adela Pankhurst Returns from New Zealand

The Woman Voter 27 July 1916:

Our friends will rejoice to hear that Miss Adela Pankhurst has concluded her New Zealand tour, not because she has done all that she could do in New Zealand but because we cannot spare her any longer from Australia. The work of our Women's Peace Army is extending in all directions, and all our workers are required here at present.

The Woman Voter 26 October 1916:

The debate between Rev Wyndham Heathcote and Miss Pankhurst was repeated at the auditorium on the 18th. In spite of the large seating capacity thousands were again turned away.

Miss Adela Pankhurst and Miss Cecilia John Tour States Return to Melbourne, August 24

The Woman Voter 10 August 1916:

Our peace and anti-conscription missionaries are having a most successful tour. Three public meetings were held in Sydney, in addition to several business meetings, and on Friday Miss Pankhurst and Miss John left for Queensland... meetings have been arranged in: Ipswich, Gympie, Maryborough, Rockhampton, Brisbane.

No Conscription—Women’s Peace Army leaflet No.1

The Woman Voter 14 September 1916:

No Conscription — That Proclamation and the Referendum: If Parliament watches the interests of the people properly, Conscription can never be made law. The Proclamation calling up the men under the Defence Act, in order to train them for service abroad, can be disallowed by Parliament, for the power to apply the Defence Act in that way exists only when there is danger of an invasion or an armed attack upon the Commonwealth.

Electors of Australia! You should mark out for political extinction any member of the House of Representatives or the Senate who votes for Conscription either by allowing the calling up of men by Proclamation, or for the Referendum Bill... Men called up by Proclamation will be under Military Law and liable to punishment whether in uniform or not.* If the young manhood of Australia once become subject to military law, they will no longer be able to avoid industrial Conscription, if the Government decides that it is necessary.

Women’s Peace Army leaflet No.2

All true women should oppose Conscription because Conscription makes wars... Never in the course of history has there been a more terrible massacre than on the Peninsular of Gallipoli...

Will you have CONSCRIPTION, and put your boys’ lives at the mercy of the International Armament Traders?

Women's Peace Army leaflet No.3

Conscription Hands Us Over to the Armament Ring. Our newspapers say that the Germans prepared for forty years to build up a military machine with which to wage this war. As a matter of fact, all the nations have been arming and pouring out the people's wealth in the death-dealing instruments which are now making Europe a shambles. And, what is more, the policy of huge armaments which made war inevitable, and rendered it so dreadful when it came, was dictated by an International Ring of Armament firms under the direction of prominent and all powerful statesmen and financiers who control parliaments, governments and the press.

Women's Peace Army leaflet No.4

Conscription and Crushing Germany — Mr Hughes says we must go on fighting until Germany is crushed, as, by so doing, we shall achieve Permanent Peace. By playing on this fear, Mr Hughes hopes to persuade the peace-loving people of Australia to sacrifice their young men on the battlefields of Europe, if the military authorities say it is necessary. To say that a permanent peace will be secured by crushing Germany is to speak ignorantly and foolishly...

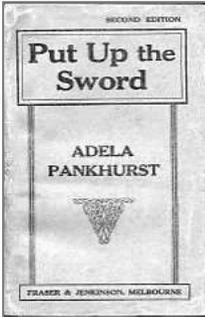
Are the women and children to be exterminated? Why? In June 1915, Germany had 6,493,000 soldiers or 10% of her total population on the field... If the Allies, by means of fearful sacrifice, destroy that 10%, the rest of the German population, 90% of it, still remain. These are mainly women and children — more than one half are children. They represent the new Germany, and in a few years they will grow to be men and women, from whom a new generation of soldiers can be recruited.

Unless the women and children are exterminated, Germany will never be crushed. Moreover, Germany has allies.

**Geraldine: There was a conscription 'referendum' 28 October 1916 & a plebiscite 20 December 1917.*

Put Up the Sword by Miss Adela Pankhurst

The Woman Voter 23 September 1915:



Now Ready!

Order At Once.

The only Book on War by a Woman.

The WOMAN'S POINT of VIEW must henceforth be considered in all matters of WAR and PEACE.

PUT UP THE SWORD sets forth some causes of the European War. It does not take the extreme view that all Wars are caused by Capitalism, but shows how a mixture of motives slowly but surely combines to bring about armed conflicts, and how arbitration regulations backed by armed force must fail to secure Peace as long as the Causes underlying warfare still remain untouched...

The book is written to show that when humanity puts up the sword it will have chosen the way of national safety and national glory.

Revival of Religion—the Church's Duty

The Woman Voter 14 September 1916:

Archbishop Clarke, speaking at the Anglican Synod, made a pathetic appeal for a revival of religion... The 'Argus,' commenting on Dr Clarke's address, says the Church is helpless to meet present problems... but is doubtful about it being the duty of the Church to help mould public measures and determine public life...

A paper, an Archbishop, and an institution that teaches that God is a God of War should not be surprised if they find the bottom knocked out of everything.

Peace Button

The Woman Voter 15 February 1917:



The Peace Button should be worn by every man, woman and child who belongs to the forces that are fighting in the allied causes of Internationalism and Australian freedom.

The button is artistically designed in purple, white and green. Price 6d.

Australian Women! Wake Up! Make War Against War. 'Lest We Forget'

The Woman Voter 5 April 1917:

When the war broke out — nay, before the war broke out — there were two or three women in our ranks who were opposed to war in any shape or form.

They stood alone in this community — alone in their organisation — alone, almost, in their homes. They were able to win their organisation, and later in a large measure the war-weary community. They gradually gathered to them forces of peace...

These women were the only ones to point out the starting-point of Conscription, and this they fought... Conscription was defeated. Was it, think you, because of the great outcry at the last moment? No. It was defeated because when the first War Census was taken there were those who saw beyond the present moment...

Friends, let us look back to the outbreak of war and see where we now stand. 'Lest we Forget.'

The Woman Voter 11 May, 1917:

Vida Goldstein: The WPA and the Women's Peace Army will be remembered in Australian History as the one band of workers who never wavered for one instant in the Australian fight for internationalism, which the WPA began on August 7, 1914.

FIGHTING AGAINST INEQUALITIES

The WPA Opposed the White Australia Policy

The Woman Voter 8 September 1911:

Mrs. Poon Gooley, wife of a Geelong Chinese resident, is to be sent back to China, in pursuance of the White Australia policy... Frankly, to us, this seems a mad and wicked policy... a Chinese woman, a wife and mother, ought to be allowed to remain with [her husband]... A Minister... ought to be able to discriminate between outrageous cruelty and proper administration... The thing is absurd and wicked.

The Woman Voter 27 October 1914:

WHITE AUSTRALIA POLICY DONE FOR — There are many Australians who have defended a 'White Australia' on economic grounds, without a thought of racial hatred, but their self-respect will no longer allow them to uphold the principle when we accept the aid of India and Japan in killing our 'white' enemies. If we make East and West one in times of war, we cannot make them two in times of peace... So, here endeth the White Australia Policy.

The Woman Voter 23 September 1915:

Asiatic Deprived of Vote — OUR BROTHERS? An Indian, Siva Singh, has been struck off the voters roll for (being) Indii. He appealed, but the magistrate dismissed the application with two guineas costs against Mr Singh. If Indians are our 'brothers' when it comes to a question of helping us kill our 'enemies', they must also be regarded as our brothers in Australian citizenship.

The Woman Voter 17 February 1916:

When the Allies called to their aid on the battlefields of Europe, Indians, Turcos, and other coloured troops, it did not require much prescience to see that the policy of a White Australia was done for, although the Labor Party did not apparently recognise the fact. Next came the news that the embargo on Japanese labour was removed in Queensland.

Then it was hinted by Mr McMahon himself, the Labour Minister for External Affairs, that it would probably be impossible to develop the Northern Territory without coloured labour. Now the 'Age' is extolling the virtues of coloured labour...

'Woman Voter' asks Australia today to accept the new order of things, and recognise its full significance — that the so-called 'common people' of all countries are brothers, and must unite in overcoming their common oppressors — those who corner the recourses of the earth. They must overcome them not with sword and shell, but with the organisation of our social forces, based on the understanding that God, the only giver of good, gives His bounty to all his children, that He is no respecter of persons — brown, or white, or yellow.

The Woman Voter 28 February 1918:

WHITE AUSTRALIA — Mr Pollock, KC, speaking before the East India Association, denounced the idea put forward in many quarters of establishing an Indian settlement in the Northern Territory...

Mr Pollock said India was not populated in part, and emigration was undesired unless it was voluntary with full citizenship. He rejected Mr Andrews' and Mr Pearson's exposure of the evils of Indian immigration in Fiji. Lord Carmichael, former Governor of Victoria, and Lord Lamington, former Governor of Queensland, both spoke in favour of White Australia policy, but soon after the outbreak of the war we realized that policy would have to be reviewed after the war, and settled by the peoples of Australia and the East if it is to bring harmonious results.

The Woman Voter 3 July 1919:

'COLOUR CASTE'S A LIE' — A convention was held at the Guild Hall on the afternoon and evening of Saturday, 7th to discuss the White Australia question. The convention was held at the instance and under the auspices of the WPA... There was a good attendance of delegates and visitors, both afternoon and evening, and great interest was shown in the

discussion...There were short speeches, pro and con... Each spoke for ten minutes, after which, under a time limit, there was a general discussion...

A White Australia has become definitely a question of world politics since the outbreak of the European war and the active entry of Japan (the chief cause of our restrictive legislation) into our national affairs...

The golden precipitate gathered... is the growth of Internationalism and of brotherhood that the tone of the proceedings marked. We are, despite economic fears and purity of blood considerations, learning the 'colour caste's a lie', and that, 'a man's a man for all o' that'.

Distress Caused by War

The Woman Voter 17 November 1914:

The WPA has decided to make an investigation into the conditions of distress caused by the war. It will commence operations in Port Melbourne.

Hands off the People's Bread

The Woman Voter 8 December 1914:

At a large open-air meeting, held at Port Melbourne by the WPA on the 4th, the following resolution was carried unanimously — 'That this meeting of citizens at Port Melbourne protests against the unnecessary rise in the price of bread and calls upon the Government to protect the people's food.'

The Woman Voter 26 January 1915:

Bread is to be 10d. a loaf on Thursday. Workers are urgently needed to collect signatures to our petition for a safeguard for the people's food.

The Woman Voter 10 February 1916:

The exploitation of the food supply of the people goes unchecked. We are not one whit better off under Labor Governments than under Conservative or Liberal Governments, which only goes to prove that the people are asleep.

The WPA Protested Against the Cost of Living

The Woman Voter 8 July 1915:

Cost of Living Deputation to Parliament—Members Frightened of Women—

The deputation to the State Parliament struck such terror into the hearts of women that the House adjourned nearly an hour and a half earlier than usual! Our brave legislatures!

The 'Argus' reported: 'Extraordinary scenes were witnessed at Federal Parliament House yesterday, when a number of women, headed by Miss Adela Pankhurst, attempted to storm the House and demand work...'

About 100 women rushed into the House shouting 'We want work. Adjourn the House.' Police cleared them out. It is understood that a number of the women present had been dismissed from the ammunition works recently.

The Woman Voter 19 January 1915:

The Government, which has broken its promise to the people, has broken it to the farmers also. Though the Premiere in his policy speech before the election stated that 'the Government had completed arrangements for securing 1,000,000 bushels of wheat for seed,' it now transpires that 250,000 only have been acquired. The farmers are to buy their seed wheat at famine price...

The speculators will gain the difference between the 250,000 bushels the Government actually did acquire and the million bushels which would have given the farmers seed and wheat at reasonable prices... Even though next year's harvest may be plentiful, we must not expect cheap bread. Next year there will be a shortage of bread in Europe, and prices will continue to rise. House agents are explaining how families are being compelled to move into smaller houses...

There is a general reduction of the standard of living for the working people of Australia... Are we to stand by helplessly while worse slums and worse poverty are being produced?

Unemployment

The Woman Voter 25 February 1915:

The number of women registering at the WPA [Unemployment] Bureau continues to increase, and our little workroom is more than overcrowded. We hope that the old cry 'Woman's place is in the Home' is dead forever. Nobody can suggest a means by which women can keep their homes together without working, and work is no longer forthcoming. The economic dependence of women upon men is seen in all its weakness at the present time.

The Woman Voter 27 January 1916:

THE UNEMPLOYED — Precious months, in which the Government should have been stimulating industry, have gone by and no provision is being made against the terrible crisis which must come when this war ends. We make an urgent appeal for material to make winter clothing for the poor women and children dependent upon the WPA, so that something may be in hand for winter.

The Woman Voter 27 April 1916:

Unemployment Distress: Distress amongst unemployed women is growing more and more acute. One by one the possessions they have are finding their way to the pawnbroker. In many homes there is such a scarcity of crockery that each member of the family has to wait his turn for food until the other has finished with the one plate or cup that the 'home' boasts of. And we call ours a civilised community!

Are We to Stand By Helplessly?

The Woman Voter 24 February 1916:

Surrounded by plenty, women and children are almost without bread, and in a rich and a spacious land hundreds of families are herded in abject poverty, crowded into dwellings wherein it is impossible that the barest decency can prevail. The story of this Australian tragedy is best told by the

hard facts revealed by the family budgets which have been collected by the Women's Labour Bureau. A selection of typical cases of semi-starvation follows:

Mrs A. Husband dead; children three - 15, 10 and 4 years. (NB little girl is a cripple) Earnings: Son, 15/- (occasionally); mother, 8/- at Labour bureau. Mrs A has no money for clothes, nor for meat, nor butter, nor milk. Her little boy collects wood for cooking...

It would be impossible to give a detailed statement of all the cases which we could disclose to an inquirer — but these are enough to show the deplorable condition into which our own people have fallen. The poor mothers who have to earn the few shillings which keep the spark of life within themselves and their children are doing so to the serious injury of their own health. The children who need their care must suffer from neglect... In many homes, the only wage-earners beside the mother are young children, apprentices and improvers in various trades. They have to maintain their parents and brothers and sisters, going to work insufficiently fed and clothed, without a penny for themselves after working all week.

Many young girls — dressmakers, white workers, and other factory workers and shop assistants — are, out of their poor wages, supporting the whole of their families, mother, father, brothers and sisters...

The streets of Melbourne are at present an appalling sight as soon as dusk falls, and thousands of children are living in the little streets off Swanston, Elizabeth, Lonsdale, Latrobe and Bourke streets, who have no playground but for the gutters... The condition of these lanes is so bad that we cannot use the back entrance after nightfall... In view of all these facts, we ask our readers — especially those who consider the 'Woman Voter' unpatriotic — is it not possible to win the war and yet to lose the souls of our own people, by continuing the struggle when the brunt of it is borne by the mothers and young children who are now being sacrificed for military victories? Investigations made by the Commonwealth Statist... showed that, compared with 1914 before the war, the cost of living has risen by 30.9%.

WPA Women's Labour Bureau

The State Government Compels Women to Accept Charity

The Woman Voter 17 August 1916:

The State Government persists in its determination to compel women who are asking for work to accept charity. It simply cannot understand the situation. Many of the members of the Ladies Benevolent Society, who for many years have been working among the poor of Melbourne and have no idea of social and industrial problems, believe that people are poor because they drink, or they gamble, or they are lazy, or they have 'silly Labor ideas' and won't 'blackleg' on their fellow workmen. They really believe that all that is necessary is a trifling charitable dole in kind for the very worst cases of destitution...

The Ladies Benevolent Society has persuaded these very men that there is no need for relief work for unemployed women... and wishes us to hand our women over to the Ladies Benevolent Society...

[Women] want work — it may be for only two days a week, perhaps even for one day, but it is not charity or compassion they are asking for... The Government assures us that we have spent our grant 'wisely and well,' that all official reports they have received are 'thoroughly satisfactory.' In that case their reasons for discontinuing the grant are unsound.

Until the Government wakens up to the mistake it has made, and the injustice it is doing to the women who seek relief work, we make the strongest appeal to you, friends to help us to maintain our workroom by contributing to our 'Work for Women' fund. It is your responsibility, as well as your privilege, as much as it is ours, to help the Government and Parliament to recognise that it is their duty to provide work for women asking for work that they may house, feed and clothe themselves and their children without the aid of charity.⁹

⁹ The Ladies Benevolent Society still existed when Edith Morgan was working as the first social worker at Collingwood Council in 1972. Edith Morgan: 'By the time that I

Relief Work for Women

The Woman Voter 11 January 1917:

Once more we are compelled to appeal to our readers for assistance of unemployed women. Every promise of help by the Government and by the Ladies Benevolent Society has proved a broken reed, except in a few cases that are new.

Equal Pay for Men and Women

The Woman Voter 15 February 1917:

On 6th, the Court of Industrial Appeals... dealt with an appeal by the Clerks' Union against an assessment of Mr Justice Cussen on December 2 1914, which discriminated between men's and women's pay... Those opposing this measure of simple justice were the metropolitan employers, country employers, Melbourne Tramway Board, Prahran and Malvern Tramway Trust. The Clerks' Union, which has a large number of women members, appeals against the determination on the grounds that —

The wages fixed were inadequate for the class of work performed and were not a living wage; That the grading of clerks was unreasonable; That the hours were unreasonable, and were not in accord with usage or custom of the trade; That most employers employed their clerks for less than the hours fixed (48), and paid them on a pro-rata basis: That there should be no differentiation in the rates paid to clerks in the metropolitan and country districts.

Our readers will realise what women felt as they listened to the discussion between the Judge and Counsel.

came to Collingwood Council it — Singleton's Health Clinic — was run by the Ladies' Benevolent Society and I saw some horrific things happening. There was a man who was sent home without treatment. He was found sitting at home, dead, a week or so later. The gangrene in his leg was so bad he hadn't been able to leave the chair since he crawled back from Singleton's.' p 17 *Women's Web stories actions* 2002 www.womensweb.com.au

BUILDING SOCIAL JUSTICE



Miss Goldstein & Miss John at Flinders Street station, collecting parcels for unemployed women. The 'Herald'

Geraldine: The WPA did more than oppose. These women also acted positively.

They instigated, organised and ran

- *The Women's Peace Army*
- *A women's employment bureau*
- *A women's labour bureau*
- *A women's farming co-operative*
- *A workers' commune at Guild Hall, Swanston St... and more.*

The WPA Established a Women's Employment Bureau and a Women's Labour Bureau

The Woman Voter 15 December 1914:

Distress in Melbourne — A Scheme to Help Unemployed Women —
We wish to impress upon our readers that Australia is in a very precarious position. Efforts are being made to deprive the community of the benefits which the devotion of many lives has won. There have been wholesale

dismissals of employees which, in many cases, are quite unjustified.

We want to take some practical steps. Charity is useless and harmful...

Women are the first to fall out of employment by nature of the work they do. The WPA will attempt, therefore, to organise the workers in industries from which they, themselves, will draw the sole profit...

The Woman Voter 2 February 1915:

On the 26th it was announced that the WPA rooms would be used as a place where women could register their names. Since then a constant stream of applicants has come pouring in.

The elderly women predominate — widows with young children, or those older still, whose sons are out of work, and who have consequently been forced to employment to live. Elderly unmarried women, worn with anxiety, with pinched faces, sit woefully beside us as we enter their names, and try to suggest an occupation in which there is room for them... Young girls, who are dressmakers, and typists, and shop assistants, hover about domestic situations, hoping that they can keep to their own employment, and yet afraid of losing the opportunity of obtaining a place...

The number of necessitous women on our books grows daily, and those who are working here are very inadequately helped. We see them growing thinner and shabbier every day, and it is of the greatest moment that the well-to-do should assist us in our work...

Do not make shirts and socks at home or in the trams and trains, but pay for them to be done by those who need the work. Six hundred mothers here are starving for what you will not give.

Is this your patriotism — that you will see your own fellow women, of your own blood, starve? If you want to sew, make us a maternity set, which will clothe a naked baby, and a suffering woman to whose agony is added cold, hunger and despair...

Women, your country needs you! Stop knitting and send in your orders for socks at once!

The Woman Voter 23 February 1915:

The number of women registered at the WPA Bureau continues to increase. Nobody can suggest a means by which women can keep their homes together without working, and work is no longer forthcoming...We now see that the wives who are breadwinners form a permanent class in the community... They are the first to fall out of work by nature of the work they do.

The WPA Established a Farming Co-operative

The Woman Voter 9 March 1915:

Out of the work undertaken by the WPA to help unemployed women, there has developed a movement to place some of these women on the land on co-operative lines. Miss John has had considerable experience in farming. Miss Higgins is equally known as an expert in flower and fruit growing. All women are invited to join to make it a success...

[WPA members] have entered into arrangements with the Closer Settlement Board for the purchase of a block of land at Mordialloc, suitable for flower arranging, fruit growing, poultry raising etc...

The Women's Farm will be open to visitors on Saturday afternoon until further notice. Take train to Mordialloc; walk one quarter miles to Closer Settlement. Cab fare 2/-. Flowers and eggs direct from the farm may be purchased at 215 Latrobe Street.

Peace Meeting at Sunbury

The Woman Voter 7 October 1915:

Miss Adela Pankhurst and Miss Cecilia John held a very successful open-air meeting at Sunbury on 25th. Some of our good friends in Sunbury were anxious to have the meeting, and arranged for it to be held in the Mechanics' Hall, but the trustee, after consideration, decided that it would be inadvisable to hold a meeting at which peace would be talked, and they refused the use of the hall.

Miss John was communicated with by telephone, and instantly said ‘We shall speak in the open-air if sufficient open-air is available,’ and thus came about one of the most successful meetings ever held in Sunbury... Miss Goldstein’s car was used as a platform, so that we are quite independent of hall accommodation.

By M S Thorpe, Hon. Sec.

The Woman Voter 23 December 1915:

We have been forbidden by the military authorities to sing or make use of the song *I didn’t raise my son to be a soldier*.¹⁰ Needless to say, the women will continue to sing it, if they feel so inclined.

Drunken Women?

The Woman Voter 16 March 1916:

‘Something must be done with these drunken women’, said Mr Bros at Clerkenwell [Court] the other day.... We do not, of course, wish to defend intemperance, but does he not think something should be done with all these drunken men?

The Little Nations

The Woman Voter 17 February 1916:

The tragic abandonment of Serbia to her fate and the continued protests by Greece against the pressure being brought to bear on her to compel her to abandon her neutrality, dispose for ever of the fiction that this war is being waged on behalf of the rights of the little nations.

Persia—New Anglo-Russian Agreement

The Woman Voter 16 November 1916:

This war, the culmination of unenlightened and anti-democratic diplomacy, has taught us that we must, in future, watch very carefully what the Great Powers are doing to the Little Powers, and to the No Powers.

¹⁰ See Appendix 2 *Some Women’s Anti-Conscription Songs*

Trade and What Comes Of It—Australia, Japan and America

The Woman Voter 11 January 1917:

The 'Argus' is waking up to what Japan is accomplishing in Australia in the way of trade expansion. Japan is doing exactly what Germany did in this country — capturing trade with cheap, inferior articles, with the object of discovering exactly 'what the public wants' preparatory to providing an article of better quality but still cheap — cheaper than can be made in Australia, where higher wages and better conditions prevail.

Then, when Japan has got a firm hold on certain markets, and, possibly, control over others, a cry will be raised about the Japanese 'menace,' and a hundred and one excuses, in addition to the racial one, will be made for 'crushing' Japan in a horrible war.

This is what becomes of trade. Instead of becoming a blessing to mankind it becomes a curse.

Prevention is better than cure — What can be done to prevent the drawing of the sword between Australia and Japan? Only the bringing about of a better understanding between the women and working classes.

Expressions of Interest are invited — This, we believe, is a statesmanlike, practical, proposal. One thing is certain; the East will become the powder keg of the future, and on the people will rest the responsibility of preventing that magazine from exploding, for the people of the East do not want war any more than did the people of the West. The people of the West did nothing to practical to prevent war. Let us profit by their mistake.

Let us work with other nations, not against them. Let us treat their aspirations with respect, as we expect them to treat ours. The thing we greatly fear comes upon us.

Let us not fear our Pacific neighbours; let us trust them, and they will trust us. But trust must be rooted and grounded in understanding. Hence our proposal.

Our Flag—Hoisted at Guild Hall

Purple: Royalty of International Justice

White: Purity of International Life

Green: Springing Hope of International Peace

The Woman Voter 11 May 1917:

On Friday afternoon our flag was hoisted at the Guild Hall, to fling its message of peace and goodwill to Australia and the world. A large number of members and friends made the journey to the roof of the hall, where our president, Miss Vida Goldstein, with the aid of Miss Cecilia John, after dedicating the flag to the cause of internationalism, hoisted it to the accompaniment of ringing cheers from the spectators... The flag waves from Guild Hall as a symbol of the sisterhood of women — the truest ideal of internationalism.

8,000 to 10,000 Unionists Out of Work

The Woman Voter 9 August 1917:

It is estimated that there are from 8,000 to 10,000 unionists out of work. Did not most of them throw up their hats wildly in favour of the war? Nevertheless, they cannot be allowed to suffer, and we join with those who are endeavouring to alleviate the position for both men and women who are unemployed.

The Strike

The Woman Voter 30 August 1917:

The strike situation grows worse daily, in spite of the evidence to the contrary in the papers, which would make us believe that the workers are a mere excrescence on the community, that it doesn't matter at all whether 60,000 men cease work — their places can readily be filled by 'loyalists' — schoolboys, clerks and women. Will YOU take one or two children of Strikers until the strike is over? The WPA has arranged with the [Union] Strike Committee to take children from the most necessitous families at once. Do Your Part!

We Beg our Readers Not to be Misled

The Woman Voter 6 September 1917:

We beg our readers not to be misled by the wickedly false statements they read in the press about the strike and the strikers. As always, it is the women and children who suffer most in such conflicts, and the WPA and Women's Peace Army are working unremittingly to relieve their needs until the strike is over, and even afterwards, for it will be many weeks before the homes will pick up again, when the men resume work... or find other jobs.

The WPA Established a Commune

The Woman Voter 30 August 1917:

This brief sketch of the WPA and Women's Peace Army shows why it was natural we should be ready for action when we saw the first signs we should be ready for action when we saw the first signs of the awakening of the people as to what must follow in the Railway Strike in NSW against the introduction of the Card System, and the Wharf Labourers Strike in Victoria against the Cost of Living by refusing to handle food for export except for war purposes.

At this point, Miss Cecilia John, with her phenomenal business ability, stepped into the breach with far-reaching proposals for establishing a commune a Workers' Commune at the Guild Hall, with the object of befriending the women and children, who are always the greatest sufferers in an industrial conflict, and helping the men to win out in their fight in their fight against the unendurable exploitation and oppression of their class, and lay the foundation of Industrial Democracy in Australia.

Guild Hall Commune in Swanston Street, Melbourne

What have we done? Miss Cecilia John, with her phenomenal business ability, [made] far reaching proposals for establishing a workers' commune at the Guild Hall... working to change the system, otherwise the help given is only a form of charity.

Miss John quickly organised a Registration Depot, Kitchens, Boot shops, Barber's saloon, Recreation Hall, Grocer's shop, Baker's shop... with an army of volunteers providing — 60,000 food parcels; 30,000 meals; 6,500 haircuts; 30,000 items of clothing; 2,000 pairs of boots; 200 cases of confinement or illness cared for. *Radical Melbourne 1969-2001*

1917 Senate Election Manifesto of the People's Candidate, Miss Vida Goldstein*

Senate Election Manifesto March 29 1917:

Desire for commercial supremacy, or fear of losing it, has kept all the nations armed to the teeth...

We do not say that this war was promoted with the deliberate object of crushing the workers, but we do say that belief in Might, the fear of enemies without and within national boundaries, the use of the press, of armament firms, of secret diplomacy, under which the great mass of the people live in avoidable anxiety, wretchedness and ugliness, had made such a clash of interests that a clash of arms between nations prepared for war, some more, some less, become inevitable when circumstances and opportunity sounded the tocsin of alarm.

Workers of the World Unite! Women of the World Unite!

The Woman Voter 11 May 1917:

Vida Goldstein: Immediately on the declaration of war many of the foremost women in the woman movement in every country set to work to bind together the forces that stood true to peace and internationalism in war-time as in peace-time. In far-away Australia the WPA took the lead, and when news came through it was found we had taken the same line of action as women in other countries. In spite of every difficulty placed in their way by Government and by the Press, the women held an International Congress at The Hague in April, 1915 for the purpose of formulating terms for a constructive and permanent peace.

Quietly, steadily, surely the gospel of internationalism has spread, and

nowhere has it spread more rapidly than in Russia and in Germany amongst the women, the workers, and the soldiers themselves. It is good indeed to think that the men who have borne the brunt of the actual fighting and have survived it will return from the battlefields to swell the forces of anti-militarism and internationalism. And the people must not fail them.

It will be said that the small number of votes cast for me as a straight-out peace and anti-militarist candidate proves that the people of Australia do not want peace. Nothing of the kind. It only proves that party allegiance is stronger than allegiance to principle... The vote against conscription was a magnificent triumph for principle by the people, but unfortunately the Labor Party could not follow up the victory to its logical conclusion—peace and anti-militarism—because the Labor Party in Australia is a Militarist Party...

The WPA and the Women's Peace Army will be remembered in Australian history as the one band of workers who never wavered for one instant in the Australian fight for internationalism, which the WPA began on August 7, 1914. Those who, believing in Peace and Internationalism, voted on May 5 for the Win-the-War-at-any-cost-of-life-rather than have-peace-by-negotiation-Labor Party, sacrificed their principles without even gaining what would have been a satisfaction to them—a Labor victory. What can a party gain in exchange for its soul?

One is reminded of the Fable of the Fox without a Tail

The Woman Voter 19 April 1917:

The peace people are 'arrogant' according to the 'Herald.' 'Arrogant!' What an ineffectual application of the word. How does the 'Herald' work it out? How is peace overbearing to war? Poor war, it is being bullied apparently by those brazen people who are unfriendly towards it... War, of course, is a poor meek thing, that should be treated gently as it treats others... However, its dignity is not likely to suffer from any hard names said of it by peace folk while there are such majestic forces as the 'Herald' to vindicate its gentle claims.

Prosecution of Miss Cecilia John & Mr Holland Under War Precautions Act

The Woman Voter 13 December 1917:

The charge by the Federal Executive against Miss John for 'having procured the commission of an offence broke down, because it was proved that no offence had been committed by Mr Holland, who, in printing the leaflet, aroused the ire of those who set the law in motion with the object of securing a conviction against him.

The charge arose out of a leaflet issued by Miss John as secretary of the Australian Women's Peace Army [in a statement made by Miss John to the effect that '88% of the men at the front voted No'].

We are fully entitled to call these court cases a victory over the Federal Government... The evidence given in the Court last Thursday, December 6, and Tuesday, December 4, was certainly remarkable, and tends to aggravate the already growing distrust of the people in the Federal Government.

Compulsion for This?

The Woman Voter 13 December 1917:

Mr Anstey MP: 'Seventy one and a half percent of the people of Australia have not a home they can call their own.' So we want to compel them to fight for the homes of the other 28½%.

Miss Adela Pankhurst

The Woman Voter 18 January 1917:

It was agreed between the WPA and Miss Pankhurst that Miss Pankhurst should sever her official connection with the WPA, owing to the fact that Miss Pankhurst and the WPA differ fundamentally as to the policy of the WPA.

Geraldine: Adela Pankhurst joined the Socialist Party in 1917, so was in conflict with Vida Goldstein, who was standing as a non-party candidate against both the Labor Party and the Socialist Party.

Geraldine: Adela's mother, the famous Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst, did not support the socialist activities of her daughter, Adela. She sent her to Australia in 1914 on a one-way ticket with £20 and a letter of introduction to Vida Goldstein.

But then Adela publicly opposed the war as well, and this at a time when the British suffragettes supported it.

8 March 1917—Mrs [Emmeline] Pankhurst's 1917 telegram to Prime Minister Hughes about her daughter, Adela Pankhurst



Mr William Hughes,
Prime Minister,
Melbourne, Australia:

'I am ashamed of Adela
and repudiate her.

Wish you all success.

Make any use of this.'

Signed: Mrs Pankhurst

Prime Minister Hughes' 1917 communication with Keith Murdoch, journalist

Joy Damousi: Prime Minister Hughes had certainly contemplated deporting [Adela Pankhurst] and wrote in 1917 —

Adela Pankhurst is making a d___d nuisance and I really don't know what to do with the little devil. I hate punishing women. But I feel I shall have to deport her.

The threat of deportation was indeed the reason for Pankhurst's hasty marriage to [Tom] Walsh.

The Socialist and the Suffragist
by Charlotte Perkins Gilman

The Woman Voter 17 February 1916:

Said the Socialist to the Suffragist:

'My cause is greater than yours!

You only work for a Special Class,

We for the gain of the General Mass, Which every good ensures!'

Said the Suffragist to the Socialist:

'You underrate my cause!

While women remain a subject class,

You never can move the General Mass, With your Economic Laws!'

Said the Socialist to the Suffragist:

'You misinterpret facts!

There is no room for doubt or schism

In economic determinism — It governs all our acts!'

Said the Suffragist to the Socialist:

'Your men will always find

That this old world will never move

More swiftly in its ancient groove While women stay behind!'

'A lifted world lifts women up,'

The Socialist explained.

'You cannot lift the world at all

While half of it is kept so small,' The Suffragist maintained.

The world awoke, and tartly spoke:

'Your work is all the same;

Work together or work apart,

Work, each of you, with all your heart — Just get into the game!'

Charlotte Perkins Gilman [USA]

The Forerunner

Letter to Miss Goldstein, and her reply

The Woman Voter 5 April 1917:

From the Women's Campaign Committee and a Public Meeting held under the auspices of the Women's Socialist League. March 28, 1917.

Dear Miss Goldstein, At a largely-attended meeting of women held at the Trades Hall on Tuesday last, 27th, it was resolved to ask you to receive a deputation from the Labor Women's Campaign Committee for the purpose of asking you to reconsider your decision of nominating as a candidate for the Senate.

While recognising your right as an individual to contest the seat if you so desire, we feel we would like you to know our views on the matter. We all recognise and appreciate the good work you have done for the Anti-Conscription movement, and yet we feel in this coming fight there is one object that overshadows all others, and that is, the question of Conscription.

There are two parties in the field — three candidates for Conscription, and three pledged to do their utmost to defeat Conscription. We know if the party is returned to power in the Representatives and capture the Senate, the small liberties we now enjoy will totally disappear. We are of the opinion that the votes which you will receive will be votes that would otherwise be given to the Anti-Conscriptionists; we know you will agree with us when we say never before was the issue so great, and the one thing that matters is to defeat conscription.

Forgetting our differences, you stood with us in our fight to defeat the referendum on 28th October last. Will you not stand with us again?

At a well-attended meeting of the Socialist Women's League held this afternoon, the same views were expressed re your candidature. We had intended to write and ask you to receive a joint deputation, but Miss McMahon informs us that you will be out of town for some time, hence our reason for writing at length.

We are, sincerely yours... Women's Socialist League

**Reply to the Secretary Labour Women's Campaign Committee,
and the Secretary, Socialist Women's League**

Dear Mrs Wallace and Mrs Warburton, I am glad that you have written me frankly about the opposition of your respective organisations to my candidature for the Senate.

I understand their point of view, but I do not agree with it because it is based on fear, and not on fidelity to the principle of international goodwill and brotherhood.

The Labor Party, the Socialist Party, the Church, the Woman Movement, all have forsaken this principle, have forsaken the people for the war. The Australian Woman Movement, of which I am privileged to be the leader, has not forsaken this principle...

I am sure that, without giving offence, I may remind you that the Labor Party did not come out against conscription until late in 1916, whereas we fought it immediately the National Registration and War Census schemes were mooted...

The Labor Party did not come into the Anti-Conscription fight until we, the Socialist Party, the Peace Alliance, and the No-Conscription Fellowship, had made it safe for them. As a matter of fact, they are really in favour of Conscription for home defence and for overseas — men are compelled to fight against their will. Moreover, the Labor Party boasts of having placed the Defence Act on the Statute Book, therefore they are responsible for the most odious form — our Boy Conscription and its class distinctions.

As long as the Labor Party stands for Compulsory Military Service of any kind, it will fail the people; the people cannot be free while they are under the yolk of compulsion, even for home defence.

I am unable to go fully into this within the limits of a letter, but my manifesto makes my position clear. My candidature will not endanger the Anti-Conscription cause, for I shall take votes from the National Party also... In their hearts the thinking people of both parties know that I am the only

candidate who is giving the right message for our country today — Women and Children first, Save Australia from becoming a Military Nation, Internationalism.

Regretting that I shall not have your support for these principles, and knowing that we shall continue to respect each other's convictions, Yours sincerely, Vida Goldstein

The New Reformation, born in Australia 1917 by Vida Goldstein

1517 — the Birth of Freedom from Unthinking Blind Obedience to the Church.

1917 — the Birth of Freedom from Unthinking Blind Obedience to the State, and Australia is its birthplace! ...

Look backwards along the corridors of time and you will see that the belief in Might as a stronger power than Right has caused the downfall of every great Empire. Look forward with a clear vision, and you will see that Right is the only Might. And so it proved to be on December 20, 1917. Every mighty force that the world that the world says is necessary to command success was with the conscriptionists.

Ninety-nine per cent of 'Press, Pulpit and Purse' were advocating conscription. Opposed to it were only the handful of papers run for ideals and not for profit, only the handful of people who would go to the stake for conscience' sake, only the people's pennies; but because they were nearest to Absolute Right, Justice, Love and Truth, they prevailed. What next? We have shown you the path we think Australia should tread. There are many others. 'CHOOSE YE'

Miss Goldstein

The Woman Voter 13 December 1917:

Early last week Miss Goldstein held hugely successful meetings in Warrnambool, Mortlake and Camperdown, under the auspices of the Corangamite Anti-Conscription Council. Later she left for Tasmania to speak at Hobart, Campbelltown, Launceston, Deloraine and Burnie.

After the War—What?

The Woman Voter 21 February 1918:

Dear Friends, Many of you may not have read the speech of the Prime Minister... June 18th. I wish, therefore, to... ask you to consider whether you do not think the best policy for Australia to pursue would be on the lines I shall put before you in this letter... Australia has an opportunity...

Because she is so remote from other countries, a war of aggression, though not impossible, is full of difficulties, and this makes it easier for us to make the colossal demand that I now ask of you...

I, therefore, ask you to appeal through your Unions to the Legislatures and Governments of all countries to bind themselves to help Australia to throw off the iron yokes of Militarism and Navalism by entering into an International Agreement to refrain from making war on her, on condition that she binds herself in return to offer, as far as possible, equal opportunities to all countries, and to submit her case for legislation to which any country takes exception, first to a Court, composed, mainly, of the men and women workers of Australia and of the dissenting country, with an International Court of Appeal similarly constituted, but excluding representatives of the contending countries...

New Lands are for New Ideas, not for the old ideas tried and found wanting in the thousands of bygone years. All have put their faith in Might; all have fallen, judged by the only standard that counts — the condition of the masses of the people. Shall Australia put faith in Might or in Right? In the sword, the machine gun, in chemical bombs, or in Love and International Goodwill? 'CHOOSE YE.'

The Woman Voter 10 October 1918:

The WPA has received an invitation from the Returned Soldiers National Party to send two delegates to a conference to consider after-the-war problems.

A Letter to Miss Goldstein from the WPA

The Woman Voter 7 November 1918:

Dear Miss Goldstein,

At a meeting of the WPA I was instructed to forward to you a motion embodying the feelings of the WPA in respect to their President. We feel that in you we have at once a friend and a leader, and we wish to take this opportunity to assure you of our heartfelt love and fidelity, and of our sincere hope that you may long be spared to watch over the interests of women and children. Yours sincerely, M Myall, Hon Sec WPA

The Dawn of Peace

Peace is dawning more brightly day by day, but the greatest mental alertness is required to distinguish even dimly between the true and the false propositions for a constructive peace. The false clamours so loudly that the still, small voice of Truth and Justice is apt to be unheard or unheeded, and the only certain outcome of peace discussions will be an outcome that those who made and those who accepted the war did not foresee, and do not want. No man knows what the outcome will be...

May we venture to prophesy? Democracy, of a kind, will triumph, but it will be of such a form that those who called most loudly for democracy will prefer before it the autocracy they seek, and seek rightly, to dethrone... The belligerents, one and all, have believed in Might, rather than in Right; therefore they have failed...

The Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount are 'the way' for nations, as for individuals. Therefore, walk ye in it, BOLSHVIKS AS WELL AS CAPITALISTS — or else, FAILURE.

Geraldine: The First World War ended with a ceasefire on 11/11/1918 when Germany signed the Armistice. This was followed by the Paris Peace Conference at Versailles in 1919, but representatives from women's organisations, Germany and other central powers, other people and organisations were not allowed to participate.

PART 3

PEACE? AFTER THE WAR IS OVER

Second International Women's Peace Congress, Zurich 1919

After the War—The Destiny of Europe?

The Woman Voter 30 January 1919:

Russia still holds the ground as master of the destiny of Europe, with Germany as a strong second, and the most significant happening since we last wrote is the decision of the Associated Governments not to interfere in Russia's internal affairs.

The value of that decision is warped by the fact that they still talk of 'restoring order,' and that Mr Lloyd George states President Wilson cordially agrees that the strongest intervention must follow if this fails — though he said previously that military intervention in Russia would prove a fantastic dream, arousing the manhood of the country against foreign invasion. It has taken the Allies a long time to see that far, and the French Government, indeed, has yielded very unwillingly to the pressure from without, in the hope, apparently, that the compromise arrived at will fail.

China

The Woman Voter 30 January 1919:

The Chinese Government has ordered the public burning of opium at Shanghai, having bought up all available supplies in order to eradicate the opium curse. The trade in opium was in the first place forced by the bayonet upon China in the interests of British merchants, and though the British government has since repented of its crime, business interests have continued theirs, in spite of tragic protests by the Chinese against the degradation of their people.

The Chinese government is setting a fine example to Western governments in regard to other commodities, as well as opium. The Six-Power loan to China was really not a loan by the Powers concerned, but a loan by the

biggest banking firms in the six countries, who used the nations, that is, the people, with the consent of their governments, for their own private interests.

Australian Representation—Our Delegates*

The Woman Voter 27 March 1919:

Before this is in print one of our delegates Miss Goldstein will, wind, weather, the epidemic scare, and other elements permitting, be on the high seas on her way to the Peace Conference. The latest communication... gives the definite information that the Conference is to take place at Berne, and not at The Hague or Paris, as was thought. The date of the opening is fixed for May 5, leaving by the 'Orsova' on the 22nd. This leaves just enough comfortable time for Miss Goldstein to reach her destination.

In a sense peace found us unready for the speedy sending of two delegates on the long and expensive journey necessary to land them at the European centre of deliberations.

In the few weeks since the announcement of the forthcoming Conference, the WPA has been busy about ways and means. The epidemic crippled its efforts sorely, making the holding of ordinary entertainments - even of assembling together for any purpose, taboo. Thus we were at an unusual disadvantage at a time when the greatest freedom to effort was necessary...

With a great heart of faith in us, and in the eternal 'coming right of right of things,' Miss Goldstein departs with little in hand. We are in honour bound to make it our privileged duty to send forward the wherewithal for her further expenses...

Friends, let us push forward our loyalty from the local pump, and realise that this is a great occasion in the world and a great opportunity for Australia to play her little part in after the war matters, as well as in the war. Peace has her Anzacs as well as war.

**Geraldine: Cecilia John was the other delegate.*

Geraldine: Feminist women were refused access to countries as they insisted on including representation from Germany. Anti-German feeling was so great that countries refused to host them.

Versailles Peace Treaty—the Old Order Is Not Changed

The Woman Voter 22 May 1919:

About a situation which is hourly changing, and about which our information is so fragmented and unreliable, it is little use of saying much. One thing, however, stands starkly clear amid all the uncertainty of the world's affairs — that is, the old order is not changed...

The winning nations, in the persons of their rulers, show that victory has poisoned them, put a dangerous virus in their veins, a kind of *ill ichor*, which, working its course, produces new wars. The map will be changed, that is all, and the balance of power readjusted...

New animosities, like mushrooms, are being sown, but unlike mushrooms, they will last long. One can hear the clatter of new swords between the words at the peace table. Such a fine term as 'mandatory powers' is but a masquerade for the old thing 'protectorate', and protectorate is, we know, a euphemism for something else.

The language and conduct of diplomacy are still to obtain, the powerful are still to hold, and the small or feeble to be subject. Whether it be old China, unmilitaristic by nature, or a small Pacific island, unmilitarised by civilisation of the Western order, places and peoples unable to force their rights are to pay the price. The defeated are to be degraded to the utmost in the unarming, crippled in opportunity, and mortgaged beyond reason. As one of the 'Huns' put it, 'stripped naked' and then told to turn out their pockets.

And Japan — but of that folly, as well as criminality, how may we speak! The Near East and the Near Future, unless a miracle happens to nullify the work of our special representative, the 'diplomatic' Mr Hughes, the next generation of Australians will rise up to curse the hour when, in supineness, their fathers led him to the councils.

Second International Women's Congress of Women, Zurich Letters from Europe

The Woman Voter 7 August 1919:

Vida Goldstein, Zurich, Switzerland, 13 May 1919.

We started operations at 9.20 am, on 13th May; got our photographs, which made us look like habitual criminals, and went straight to the Agent-General's office... By 4 o'clock we were duly authorised to leave England, enter and leave France, and enter Switzerland...

We hurried back to St Pancreas, collected our luggage, drove to my friend's flat for dinner, and then away to Waterloo Station. The two hours journey to Southampton was a joy; the country was looking so very beautiful.

Arriving... [O]n to the 'Normannia' we managed to get a very comfortable cabin to ourselves, and six and a half hours' sleep while crossing the English Channel to Havre, arriving there the following morning at 7 o'clock.

We had half an hour to spare before the train started, so thought we would have 'breakfast' at the station restaurant. We did — the most awful meal I have ever had; a roll of brown bread, hard as a bullet — to suit the times — no butter, no margarine; something that looked like tea, but tasted like anything else; and two little pellets of saccharine... Butter, white bread, sugar, are still unprocurable in France, at least for ordinary folk, or even for extra ordinary folk who frequent the fashionable Paris restaurants...

The odious tipping system is in full force...

We could not see much of Paris, but it looked as beautiful as ever...

We arrived at Zurich at 11pm on the 15th... We received a great reception at the conference; but my account of all that followed must wait till my next letter, as I must close up now...

I hope my letters reach Australia by each mail; if they do not, it will be due to delays with the censorship, which still operates in these parts.

Some of the Resolutions Passed at the Conference at Zurich

The Woman Voter 7 August 1919:

Conditions in Europe — This International Congress of Women regards the unemployment, famine, and pestilence extending through great tracts of Central and Eastern Europe and through parts of Asia as a profound disgrace to civilisation... and urges...

1. That the blockade be immediately lifted;
2. That all the resources of the world, food, raw materials, finance, transport, be organised immediately for the relief of the peoples from famine and pestilence;
3. That, if there is an insufficiency either of food or transport to supply all the demands, luxuries shall not be given transport from one country to another until the necessaries of life are supplied to all, and the people of every country be rationed in order that all the starving shall be fed.

Terms of Peace — The whole resolution from which this is extracted was carried unanimously, the German delegates, however, refraining from voting.

Relation of Pacifists to Revolutionary Movements: The world is facing widespread revolutionary changes, coming at a time when the habit of violence has been fostered by a world war; we recognise that there is a fundamentally just demand underlying most of these revolutionary movements.

We declare our sympathy with the purpose of the workers who are rising up everywhere to make an end of exploitation and to claim their world. Nevertheless, we reassert our belief in the methods of peace, and we feel that it is our special part in this revolutionary age to counsel against violence on both sides.

Ireland — This congress maintains the rights of Ireland, the nation whose struggle to retain her lost liberty has been the longest of any in Europe, to self-determination.

This International Congress Expresses Deep Regret

The Woman Voter 1 September 1919:

June 8, 1919 Geneva, Switzerland, Letter from Miss Goldstein:

The greatest interest centred around the discussion of the Peace Terms, which were unanimously held to be a violation of the Fourteen Points, and the following resolutions were agreed to —

This International Congress of Women expresses its deep regret that the Terms of Peace proposed at Versailles should so seriously violate the principles upon which alone a just and permanent peace can be secured, and which the democracies of the world had come to accept.

By guaranteeing the fruits of the secret treaties to be the conquerors, the Terms of Peace tacitly sanction secret diplomacy, deny the principles of self-determination, recognise the right of the victors to the spoils of war, and create all over Europe discords and animosities which can only lead to future wars.

By the demand for disarmament of one set of belligerents only, the principle of justice is violated and the rule of force is continued.

By the financial and economic proposals a hundred million people in the heart of Europe are condemned to poverty, disease and despair, which must result in the spread of hatred and anarchy within each nation.

With a deep sense of responsibility, this Congress strongly urges the Allied and Associated Governments to accept such amendments of the terms as shall bring the Peace into harmony with those principles enumerated by President Wilson, upon the faithful carrying out of which the honour of the Allied peoples depends. This Congress holds that the peaceful progress of the world can only be assured when the common interests of humanity are recognised in the establishment of a League of Nations, which shall represent the will of the people and promote international co-operation.

The Starving Babies of Germany

The Woman Voter 27 March 1919:

The blockade — From Miss Harriet Newcomb comes a letter describing the terrible sufferings of mothers and babies in Germany, the result of that unfortunate 'military necessity', the British Blockade.

To some minds it contains the absolute condemnation of militarism in each and all of its manifestations. If the results of war, conducted in a perfectly fair, humane and gentlemanly way, as politician, churchman and journalist have, every day for four years assured us it was conducted, are so dire, what must they be where a nation 'deliberately makes war on women and children?'

Miss Newcomb says: 'The pitiful conditions of thousands of little babies in Germany cannot be exaggerated; it can only be compared to the state of things known in India during one of the worst famines. Facts are paid for by unimpeachable authorities.'

The medical authorities in Germany have appealed to England for 1,000,000 India rubber teats. The mothers in Germany, through underfeeding, cannot suckle their infants... The babies are too weak to suck through the bone or wooden teats which are all that can be provided.

The Woman Voter 1 May 1919:

Starving Babies — In response to the appeal to refund Miss Newcomb's £10, on behalf of women overseas, we gratefully acknowledge: Lutheran Church £4; Mr Mueller 2/6; Sympathetic 2/6; AFriend 2/-; AN 5/-; WN 5/-.

It is War, It is War

The Woman Voter 1 September 1919:

Letter from Miss Goldstein, Geneva, Switzerland, 8 June 1919:

Quite the most wonderful and inspiring incident of the whole Congress was when Fraulein Gustava Heymann, of Germany, approached Mme Melin...

(and) presented her, in the name of German women, with a simple bunch of pink roses... She called upon the women of all countries to do all that was possible to fight against war...

‘It is not my country, it is not your country that is guilty of the crimes against humanity — c’est La Geurre, c’est La Geurre.’ (It is War, It is War.)

Heaven Send Something to Save the World from us

The Woman Voter 3 July 1919:

Peace has come. Let those who can still deceive themselves celebrate it. It is unspeakable, what there is of it. We have saved the world from the Germans. Heaven send something to save the world from us.

The Home Government, through Mr Churchill, explained the necessity for preparing for perpetual war. We are at war or warring in pretty well every quarter of the globe...

We consign to starvation... women, little children and old men — firmly refusing to end our war with them, even when the war with their men had ceased... We bomb defenceless towns from the air, while our press is still yelling for the blood of those who transgressed international law and our gentle women and brave men bear these things with an equanimity in which can be detected not one quiver of protest. I wish, for my soul’s relief, I could find two words that would express our damnable hypocrisy.

Modern Diplomacy

The Woman Voter 2 October 1919:

The old-time piracy and brigandage of what are styled the bad old days, when life was worth the living, began to seem strangely decent. They move us almost to veneration when compared with our modern diplomacy, particularly in its best advertised stunt ‘the protection of weaker nations’.

The old-time hell, which went with the old-time despotism, never staged such unspeakable horrors, never dreamt them, as those which this ‘protection’ includes.

The merest acquaintance with its benign operations in China, Korea, Persia, India, Finland, Egypt, and all the rest of these cherished and sheltered countries, is enough to drive a sane man mad. In the minds of the self-appointed defenders of the weak, protection, extermination and slavery are synonymous terms; that is why 'The Argus' refers to Russia's liberating message as 'sinister.'

There is, of course, the best of reasons why the release of Persia from the grasp of the old Russian regime should have a sinister appearance to our eyes. Russia was doing our dirty work there, and the naked villainy of her performance was such that we were forced to be blind to them, and, now that Russia has given Persia her freedom, we must reduce her to slavery unaided. That does not seem much in itself, but every task of the kind adds greatly to the national responsibility.

What a thought compelling comment on the general situation this message might be to the patriots, if patriots ever thought.

The Persian delegates hung around the closed doors of the Paris Conference, seeking justice from the victorious upholders of Right against Wrong quite in vain, till out of Russia, outcast, Bolshevik Russia, came to their people the word of life and hope, and a new beginning.

If only the upholders of Right would let them have life and hope and a new beginning!

The Blockade

The Woman Voter 18 December 1919:

The world is sick unto death, and the sources of Government – if we may put it so — polluted.

The blockade is the devilish anti-climax of the war; the cold blooded, unimaginative concerted actions of our rulers, into whose hands we, with the other democracies, lie like puppets, dumb and obedient, guiltily impotent, or wickedly acquiescent to the awful horrors done in the name of expediency by our representatives.

PEDDLERS¹¹

by MEF

The Woman Voter 1 September 1919:

'What have you there, my men, my men,'

'Tis a cargo animate/
A cargo of pain, of flesh and brain—A precious freight.'

'We're full, my men, all full, all full: That is the sorry truth;
With a cargo of groans and broken bones—Remnants of youth.'

'Yet give us room, good men, good men, For the blood is ebbing fast;
The good, brave blood, it pours in flood, And we are aghast.'

'Nay, we are full, good men, good men. With a woe like unto theirs:
Peddle them on till a place is won For your broken wares.'

So they peddled, and on, and on. With the terrible freight of pain.
Of bleeding youth for the name of truth. Slaughtered and slain.

At last a haven of rest arose Out of the weeping sea;
Thank God! At last that night is past, For the help to be.

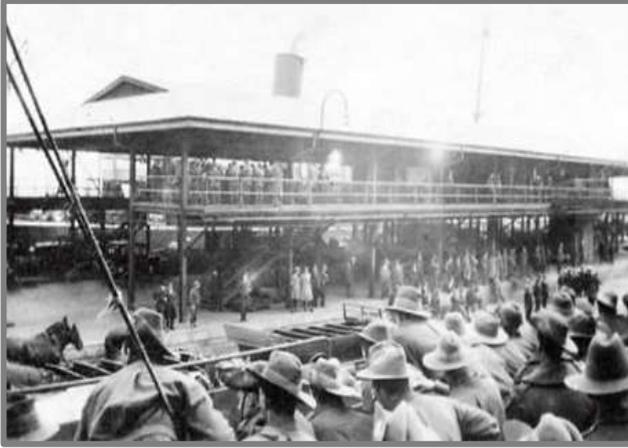
'What brings you here, my men, my men?'
'Dead men we bring,' they said,
'And a cargo of sighs and agonies For the cargo dead.'

MEF

MEF

¹¹ 'The Dardanelles Campaign [1915-1916] Nevison: Many of the wounded remained long without treatment... A fleet sweeper crowded with Australian wounded went wandering from ship to ship in vain... with a cargo of dying men, as though she were a peddler.' Included by MEF

RETURNING SOLDIERS



'Aussie again,' the Port Melbourne Pier as we pull up, 1919
Gift of Mrs Holloway, SLV



A mother greets her son, who has survived the Great War.
AUSTRALIA: A HISTORY IN PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL CANNON

To Right the Wrongs under which Their Comrades Had Lived

The Woman Voter 7 August 1919:

From Miss Goldstein on the HMS Orsova, nearing Suez, 28 April 1919:

The Anzac sermon was preached by an army chaplain; it was a glorification of the Australians, with some humorous sidelights. It had none of the dignity and impressiveness that one would have thought the occasion demanded, and offered no comfort to those present who had lost relatives at Gallipoli and on other battlefields.

He denied absolutely the oft-repeated statement that the Australian soldiers were undisciplined. They were splendidly disciplined, he said, but their disciplined conduct had no trace of servility.

He spoke feelingly of the social conditions that had killed soldiers before they entered the trenches; the evidence in the trenches of the terrible results of those social conditions had roused many men to their sense of their duty towards their fellows, and made them resolve that when they returned to civil life they would do all in their powers to right the wrongs under which their comrades had lived.

Miss John Returns

The Woman Voter 6 November 1919:

Miss Cecilia John, after her 6 months absence in Europe, received a hearty welcome from her friends, private and public, on her return... Miss John has crowded into her short time in Europe, England and America an astonishing number and variety of experiences. Besides the Women's Peace Conference, she attended at Zurich, in company with Miss Goldstein, she came into touch with many vital men and women in Paris, London and elsewhere.

She has come back more ardent than ever for the cause of humanity from all she has seen and heard from her touch with the Old World.

The harrowing facts of the results of the food blockade in Middle Europe,

the disgraceful under causes of the Allied intervention in Russia, the awful poverty of London and of other great centres, the industrial conditions of the people — all these things Miss John learned much of at first hand, besides getting in touch with musical ideas and progress in the older countries.

It is Miss John's belief that... [by] the common tongue of music, much will be done in the great work ahead — the bringing together in a common bond the peoples of the earth. To that end Miss John intends to pursue her art in Melbourne, bringing music to the people.

Just as earnestly and heartily, 'because of all the things she has seen,' she will bend her powers likewise to the direct teaching and preaching of those things which are to bring to being of that better order to which our longing tends.

Miss Goldstein in London

The Woman Voter 7 August 1919:

Vida Goldstein: Soldiers everywhere, the workers everywhere are being roused to white heat by the failure of their Governments to do anything to meet the difficulties with which they are faced in finding employment, in finding decent housing, decent food, decent clothing, except at exorbitant prices, and prices are rising daily, especially with those commodities which are no longer 'controlled' by the Government.

Week after week serious strikes have occurred... It is useless to gloss over the situation. The same influences that are at work in Europe are at work in Australia...

The remoteness of Parliament from the people, from industry, from the vital needs of the community, could not have made itself felt more clearly. And thought turned naturally to other lands, with other messages, and I wondered how the change would come in English-speaking countries.

Through Reason and Justice and Understanding; not by violence, is my hope.

Addressing Ourselves Seriously to the Arts of Peace

The Woman Voter 18 December, 1919:

Whatever comes, there is nothing that will get us all out of the slough, soldiers and citizens alike, but addressing ourselves seriously to the arts of peace; strenuously developing the best within ourselves, and the rich capacities of this beautiful land of ours...

It is the spirit of the people that counts.

Authorised by Mary E. Fullerton, the Guild Hall, 32-34 Swanston Street, Melbourne

And

Vida Goldstein:

The Peoples, as well as the Governments, have sown the seeds of misunderstanding and of hate and are reaping the whirlwind, and we must bring in the soft breezes of sweet reasonableness, of charity, of clarity to the considerations of social and industrial problems.

There can be no peace until people understand what true internationalism means. People must learn to lead themselves...

THE 'VOTER' DOES NOT DIE

The Woman Voter 18 December, 1919:

We have to notify subscribers and readers generally of this paper that with this issue this publication ceases...

And so 'The Voter,' that hardy organ that has sounded the bugle of many a fight blows its own 'Last Post.' It has called 'victory' many a time, never 'the retreat,' nor has it camouflaged or compromised. If there are those who have not liked it or agreed with it, yet they have respected its fearless tone.

It has voiced the woman's point of view; made clear that aspect of things too easily forgotten or overlooked in the hurry-scurry of a man-ruled world.

It has fought (and its predecessor 'The Woman's Sphere') the battle for woman's political freedom — and won. It has helped to sweep away many inequalities in woman's lot, social and industrial. It has seen the platform of women's demands pass from the banana skin and old egg period to the grave pages of the Statute Book. It has seen the prophet proved wrong and the shaker of the head confounded...

To the immortal credit of the WPA and its President, we were one of the shining minority who remained true to the principles of Peace, as espoused so loyally by the 'Voter', when so many others, alas, bowed to expediency.

The 'Voter' never turned its back, but marched breast forward, then as ever. It cared neither for the cautions of the timid or the blame of enemies. It walked right through the censor, or, when he worsted it in an encounter, was doubly eloquent...

And now the 'Voter' does not die, nor does perish the work that it has done, mostly by the pen of its editor, Miss Goldstein. Its voice has gone into many places of the earth, and its influence has been potent.

It has been a trailblazer.

Influenza Epidemic/Pandemic and Strikes

Between 1919-1920, it is estimated that up to 15,000 died in Australia... In Sydney alone, 40% of the residents were affected. But 1919 was also the year of the biggest strike wave in Australia's history.

www.solidarity.net.au

Miss Goldstein

The Woman Voter 18 December 1919:

It is Miss Goldstein's intention to remain for a time, at least, in England... Decision only arrived at after returning to England after the Conference.*

**Geraldine: Vida Goldstein was stranded in London without the fare home.*

Not Enough to Pay for Miss Goldstein's Return Passage

The Woman Voter 18 December 1919:

Owing to strike and to the outbreak of influenza, the amount raised was disappointing — only £268/15/9 — not enough to pay for Miss Goldstein's return passage. This, however, will be unnecessary, for, when severing her connection recently with the Women's Political Association in order to take up other work,* she requested that no more money should be sent to her.

Ina Higgins, Hon. Treasurer

**Geraldine: The 'other work' taken up was that she obtained employment with the Christian Science Church, becoming a practitioner.*

And Then

Geraldine: On her return to Australia three years later, Vida left public life. She continued to campaign, but on individual issues such as equal pay and later bacterial warfare and nuclear disarmament.

In 1945 Vida observed:

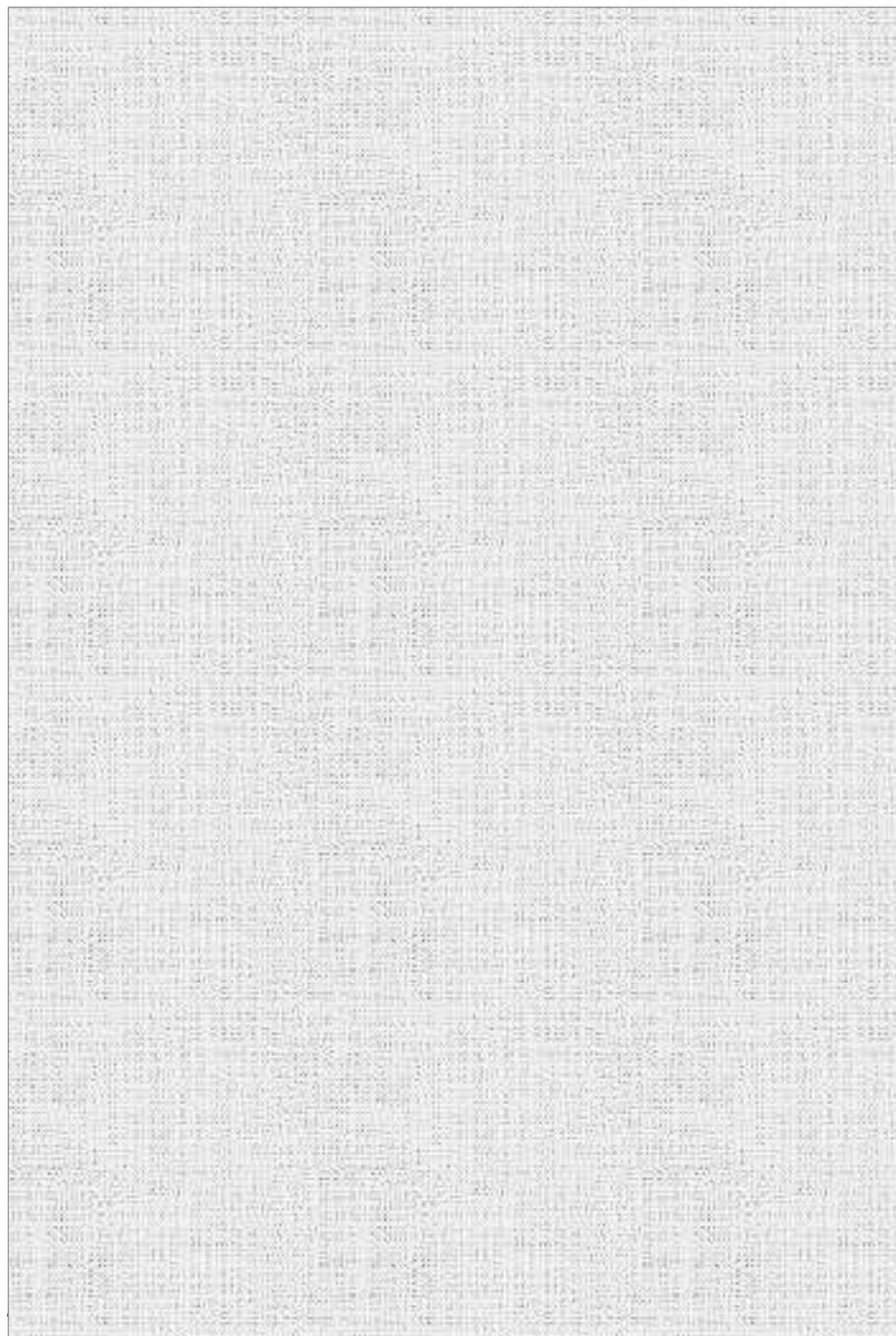
No organisation has ever taken the place of the WPA, which was always known for its alertness regarding questions of women and children and social and industrial conditions.

Is there a lack of younger people fired with the desire to build a really new world, to become real crusaders to establish a genuine co-operative movement which makes service and not profit the foundation motive?

As I see things neither a return to free enterprise nor an advance to socialism will meet the situation.

Maurice Blackburn papers, SLV

=====



APPENDIX 1—Women’s 1891 ‘Monster’ Suffrage Petition



To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Colony of Victoria, in Parliament assembled.

The Humble Petition of the undersigned Women of Victoria respectfully sheweth:—

That your petitioners believe:

That Government of the People by the People and for the People should mean all the People, and not just one half.

That taxation and Representation should go together without regard to the sex of the taxed.

That all Adult Persons should have a voice in Making the Laws which they are required to obey.

That, in short, Women should vote on equal terms with Men.

Women’s 1891 Suffrage ‘Monster’ petition, prov.vic.gov.au

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray your Honourable House to pass a measure for conferring the Parliamentary Franchise upon Women, regarding this as a right which they most ardently desire. And your Petitioners will ever Pray.

Name

Address

Several interesting signatures adorn the top of the petition, including: Margaret McLean (as Mrs William McLean), head of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and campaigner for women's rights and the vote; Jane Munro (as Mrs James Munro), wife of the Premier who presented the petition to Parliament; Margaret Higinbotham, wife of George Higinbotham who was a controversial politician and lawyer; Bessie Lee, a working-class woman who became famous as a temperance campaigner and author.

The petition also played an important role in Federation, because in 1901 Australia became the first nation in the world to give women both the right to vote and the right to stand for Parliament.

www.parliament.vic.gov.au/about/the-history-of-parliament/womens-suffrage-petition

APPENDIX 2—Some Women’s Anti Conscription Songs

(Geraldine: These were sung in Jeannie Marsh’s street opera ‘Serenading Adela’¹² performed on 7 January 2018, to celebrate 100 years of activism.)

Women’s Anti-Conscription Committee: In the first week of October, three separate meetings were held on the one night, at the Women’s Political Association, Socialist Hall and Guild Hall, where women from the WPA and VSP shared the platform... On 21 October 1916, a Women’s No Conscription Demonstration took place... socialists...combined with Women’s Political Association members... and Labor Party activists... lead a procession of 10 000 women from the Guild Hall in Swanston Street to the Yarra Bank, where the crowd had swelled to 50 000. <https://folkstream.com/reviews/anticonscription.html>

I Didn’t Raise My Son to be a Soldier

Once when a mother was asked would she send/
Her darling boy to fight,
She just answered ‘NO’/ And I think you’ll admit she was right.

Chorus—

I didn’t raise my son to be a soldier,
I brought him up to be my pride and joy:
Who dares to put a musket on his shoulder
To kill some other mother’s darling boy?

The nations ought to arbitrate their quarrels.
It’s time to put the sword and gun away,
There’d be no war today if mothers all would say
I didn’t raise my son to be a soldier.

All men are brothers, our country, the world;
The glories of war are a lie:
If they ask us why We’ll just tell them that mother’s reply.

Australian Hymn of Freedom—*Tune: Australia Will Be There*
Women’s Anti Conscription Committee:

Arouse ye mothers of the free/Stand loyal to your trust,
Lest all that stands for liberty/ Be ground into the dust;

¹² <https://brunswickcoburganticonscription.wordpress.com/serenading-adela/>

And the future of this country/ That should be great and grand,
Shall be burdened with the sorrow/ Caused by a tyrant band.

Chorus—

Mothers, wives and sisters of Australians,
Would ye have your kinsmen bond or Free?
Vote No! Preserve their liberty/ For 'Yes' would mean our slavery,
And all the little children/ Would future conscripts be —
Shall we permit this passively? Vote No! No! No! No!
Australia will be free, Australia will be free.

Now raise the slogan valiantly/ And all assist to see
That where men fought as free men/ Still free men they shall be;
And the struggles of your fathers/ Shall not have been in vain.
Let us preserve our freedom/ Or Australia's honour stain.

Women's No-Conscription Song [Short version]

Australian Women's Peace Army:

Every woman has got to have a say/ Before they can send our men away;
So I want you all to know why the women will say NO
To Mr Hughes on Referendum Day.

Chorus—

For Conscripts our men shall never be/ We're going to defend their liberty;
And I want you all to know/ That my vote will say NO!
To Mr Hughes on Referendum Day.

To the soldier I would say/ Don't let them filch your rights away
Make sure before you roam of your enemy at home
By voting NO on Referendum Day

Working women your cause be true Remember what your men would have you do.
Don't forget the daily press is whining for a Yes
Vote NO and down the powers opposed to you.

And now I've got a final word I'll say We have no right to vote our men's lives away,
Oh mothers, sisters, wives, ye who travail for men's lives,
Think well before you vote their lives away. Papers of Sam Merrifield, SLV

APPENDIX 3—Enemies of Vida Goldstein and the WPA

Vida Goldstein: Some of the stock arguments against the Woman Suffrage Petition were 'Women's Sphere is the home' The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world' 'Women do not want the vote' Man is the sturdy oak, woman the clinging vine' 'Women's brains aren't as big as men's' 'There never has been a woman Shakespeare' 'No great country has enfranchised its women' 'It was Eve who tempted Adam' 'The bible says women must submit to their husbands.'

A more inelegant objection was that 'Women were shrieking cockatoos'... but when the pioneer suffragist Mrs Love pointed out that it was the male cockatoo who did the shrieking, we didn't hear any more of that particular argument.

Pioneer Pathways, WCTU Melbourne, 1948

The Australian Women's National League (AWNL)

Janice N Brownfoot: Vida Goldstein's admirable poll of 51,497 votes in her 1903 campaign had shown the potentiality of the women's vote. Her success, however, aroused fear in the opposite political camp. The result was the formation of the AWNL. (It was) not formed by women but by men...

(The) aim in forming the League was to use it as an electoral body, an adjunct to the men's Leagues, and electoral activity became a most important part of League work; it was always concerned with electing men of 'character' to politics... never feminist ... and hostile to the Women's Political Association ... (It) considered it immoral. The hostility was mutual... [It was] virtually the direct antithesis of Vida Goldstein in her public methods of work and her political views.

Women's Organisations and the Woman Movement in Victoria 1890-1908, 1968 SLV

Judith Smart: A women's league had been mooted by the Victorian Employers' Association in June 1903, and at the end of September over two hundred women gathered to discuss the suggestion in the 'Cliveden' ballroom, on the invitation of Lady Clarke.

Double Time: Women in Victoria Penguin 1984

The [AWNL] Woman's Paper, Melbourne 24th May, 1906:

Empire Day — We stand as the white man's lonely outpost in Eastern Seas. Looming up above us are the mysterious, crowded lands of Asia.

Once their hordes went west, desolating everything before them. Now, they will come south should the opportunity ever be presented to them.

But that chance can only be given should Australia, in a fit of blindness, remove herself from the protection of Empire... It is a happy sign of the times that the first plank of our newest political body, the Australian Women's National League, is 'Loyalty.'

www.prejudiceandreason.com.au

Eva Hughes: Our best power lies *behind* the throne, guiding right-thinking men... to act for *us* — amending laws relating to women and women's honour, framing new ones as will safeguard our interests.

Double Time—Women in Victoria p.183

1907 Australian Women's National League report 1/7/1907: The movement spread rapidly and, at the second Annual Demonstration, on the 4th September last, the League numbered eighty three branches, with a total membership of ten thousand.

www.prejudiceandreason.com.au

Judith Smart: By 1909 the (Australian Women's National) League's numbers were 16,000, from about 120 branches throughout Victoria, most of whom had been persuaded to join the fight for the 'anti-socialist cause'.

By 1911 the League had 25,000 members on its books... and it continued to climb to 52,000; it was to reach a peak of 54,000 during the war. *

Double Time: Women in Victoria Penguin 1984

**Geraldine: I understand the WPA, at its peak, had approximately 1,000 members.*

The Woman 1 July 1914: The League is strictly national; it takes in all classes of women, rich and poor... if they love Australia, and want to work for her prosperity and for freedom of thought and action, the League will welcome them as members...

The members of the League do not seek place or power; they do not wish to send women to Parliament. They wish to educate themselves and others to use consciously and intelligently the vote the country has given them, and they wish to keep their homes pure and united, their faith in God undisturbed and unshaken, and to see their country free and prosperous.

The Woman 1 September 1914:

The Empire on Its Trial: A Lesson for Australia

Our Empire, in spite of vain efforts to secure Peace, has been unwillingly drawn into the vortex of the long-dreaded Armageddon...To her credit, be it said, that Great Britain did all in her power to prevent this world-wide catastrophe.

The Woman 1 April 1915:

Brighton 'Fight or Work' Campaign: A balance-sheet just issued shows there is £1,794 at the credit of the Fight or Work Campaign. More workers are needed, especially for the making of arm baths, bed tables, and bandage winders. A consignment of 500 pairs of crutches, locally made, is being sent away by the next transport.

The Woman July 1916:

Pulpit

The Woman Voter 10 September 1912:

The deputation of the Council of Churches to the Prime Minister, to protest in the name of morality and the sanctity of marriage against the mothers of illegitimate children receiving the proposed maternity grant of £5, gives one furiously to think. It was argued that... because of the proposal 'a thrill of horror was running through the hearts of the best people of Australia.'

The Woman Voter 21 July 1914:

Has the Church publicly proclaimed its adherence to an Equal Moral Standard for Men and Women? ... What protest has the Church made against the mischievous but widely held view that women must be subservient to men in sexual matters, on the ground that women's chief cause for existence is to perform sexual functions? It is this false and wicked view which is, fundamentally, responsible for the outrages upon children we all deplore.

While we see the Church is making no protest against the state of society which ostracises and persecutes the fallen women... we cannot feel that the duty of the Churches is done, and we hope that Church women will use their influence to bring about more prominently before the Church authorities the terrible suffering which our unequal standard... is creating in the community.

The Woman Voter 4 August 1914:

Ten thousand Anglican Churchmen will hold a conference... to discuss the possibility of women entering the priesthood of the Church... Archbishop Clarke [Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne] makes the following comment: 'There can be only one answer to it. It is an impossibility, not only for scriptural reasons, but in the view of the tradition of the Church.'

The Woman Voter 24 February 1916:

Dr Mannix [Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne]* is much concerned at the decline at the birth-rate, and charges the medical profession generally with malpractice. This charge, whether it be true or false, we leave to the doctors to answer; but one thing we know, and that is women are not going to be made breeding machines for the god of war.

War — red and bloody war — will not have the toll so much desired by it, for women will increasingly refuse to give life that men may take it. The prostitution of the brain of man in making all science but a means of dealing death in more horrible forms will not be followed by the prostitution of women in giving life to a child that it may grow to manhood but to murder his fellow man.

**Geraldine: Dr Mannix was also a major force opposing conscription.*

Press

She was pretty she was fair: Tailor-made and Debonair.
She was clever, she was bright; And her politics were right.
She was gifted in her speech; She had mighty truths to teach.

But one thing she had a-missing, Which the legislator wants,
And I almost blush to name it, But she really hadn't — pants,
No she hadn't, Really hadn't, Poor Vida hadn't pants.

For the great Australian nation, Though it loves to woo and flirt,
Will never bend its noodle/To unmitigated skirt.

A Victorian Newspaper: The suggestion that women are equal to men is absurd. They are as inferior mentally as physically. That they are physically goes without saying; that they are so mentally the ages have proved.

Vida Goldstein papers, *Woman Suffrage in Australia*

The *Argus*: Women were constituted by God to be the queen of the affections of the heart and the empress of the household and any artificial means adopted by Parliament to alter that state of things were contrary to the law of nature and the law of God... Do you want women to neglect their homes and become members of Parliament? Are you in favour of all the bad women of Melbourne getting into Parliament? If not, sign here...

www.womenworkingtogether.com.au/4.%20Anti-Suffragists.1900-10.html

'Anti' Politicians

The Australian Women's Sphere:

Mr Frank Madden MP (Assembly 1895): Woman suffrage would abolish soldiers and war, also racing, hunting, football, cricket and all such manly games. We may depend upon it that a compulsory 8 hours Bill would be at once taken up, and with it a minimum rate of wage made law... Women suffragists are the worst class of socialists. 'Thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee!' This law is clear and plain. Their idea of freedom is polyandry, free love, lease marriages and so on. Are these qualifications for the franchise?... Are we to allow women who would sap the very foundations of a nation to have votes?

The Woman Voter 8 December 1914:

Dr Embling (Sept 5 1899): What is this cry of the emancipation of women? I call it by a much better term — the degradation of women ... The first sign... was the French Revolution which destroyed the whole feudal system of Europe.

Mr C Campbell, MLC (1896): The women who were asking for this vote did not belong to the respectable classes of society ... (They) are a few agitators and extremists, and the unfortunate of the city.

Mr Staughton: The class of women who are now howling about women's suffrage would be at every little dirty corner, arguing and quarrelling and fighting. It is their nature.

SLV LTM49 13442

And

Carmen Callil: It is an eternal truth that when the word 'family' is uttered by a politician, women, and therefore men, have everything to fear.

Bad Faith — A Story of Family and Fatherland Vintage 2007 p.21

Farley Kelly: Carrie Reid and Freda Derham, daughters of leading commercial and political families, protested in the *Argus* that an overwhelming majority of Victorian women actively disliked the idea of voting. Adopting suffragist tactics, they suggested a massive petition.

The response was immediate; within a week 250 petitions circulated in tearooms, newsagents and other public places. An Anti-Suffrage League was mooted: the instigators, pleading natural delicacy, were reluctant to take the platform. Chivalrous males hastened to the rescue.

Among notable knight-errants were the retired owner-principal of a girls' school, R H Budd, and, as chairman of the first meeting, J R Y Goldstein [Vida's father], a political prize, who explained to an appreciative audience that he had never met Misses Reid and Derham, but that on reading their letter he had hastened to offer all possible assistance: 'the meeting could understand why.'

[H]e explained his anti-suffrage objectives as being 'to preserve true womanliness in woman.'

Marilyn Lake, Farley Kelly, *Double Time Women in Victoria 150 Years* p.173 Penguin 1985

From the Past—Queen Victoria

The Queen is most anxious to enlist everyone who can speak or write to join in checking this mad, wicked folly of 'Woman's Rights,' with all its attendant horrors, on which her poor feeble sex is bent, forgetting every sense of womanly feeling and propriety. Lady ___ ought to get a GOOD WHIPPING...

Woman would become the most hateful, heartless, and disgusting of human beings were she allowed to unsex herself; and where would be the protection which man was intended to give the weaker sex?

www.worldwideschool.org/library/books/hst/biography/Queen_Victoria/chap42.htm

And further from the past—Marcus Porcius Cato, Consul 195 BC: If every married man had made sure that his wife looked up to him and respected his marital authority, we should not have half this trouble with women in general... We have failed to control each woman individually, and we find ourselves quailing before a body of them... If you allow them to achieve equality with men, do you think they will be easier to live with? Once they have equality, they will be your masters.

www.womenworkingtogether.com.au CHAPTER 4 Anti-Suffragists 1900-1910

ADVERSE SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN MELBOURNE A CENTURY AGO in two parts:

**Part 1. Isabella Goldstein & friends—1891:
poverty/lack of affordable housing.¹³**

**Part 2. Vida Goldstein & Friends—1916:
unemployment/prohibitive food prices.¹⁴**

¹³ Isabella Goldstein was described in her obituary in the *Melbourne Herald*, 18.01.1916 as a 'progressive feminist social reformer, a pioneer, social service soldier, a fighter who made the way easier for other women social welfare workers, [bringing] ridicule and abuse upon herself for dabbling in public affairs... Mrs Goldstein's views on social and political questions coincided with those of her daughter, Miss Vida Goldstein, to whom she was devoted.

¹⁴ Vida Goldstein was described in her obituary in the *Argus* (Melbourne), 22.08.1949 as a 'gifted speaker and a woman of balanced judgement... a pioneer... an able and advocate of the cause she championed. We have a memorial garden to the pioneer women of this country in the Botanical Gardens. Could not some plaque be placed there, or at least a tree be planted, in memory of this brave, brilliant and capable leader of women?'

Part 1: 1891



Late Mrs Isabella Goldstein [1849-1916], feminist movement in Australia. Obituary from *Melbourne Herald* 18/1/1916.

Among The Workless - Feeding the Hungry. Melbourne : David Syme and Co., July 1, 1892. State Library of Victoria.

Seeking Admission to the Night Shelter For Women. Melbourne : David Syme and Co., June 1, 1891. State Library of Vic.

HOW THE POOR LIVE—THE REV CHARLES STRONG AND INSANITARY HOUSES

A Visit to Some of the Hovels

—Death, Typhoid and Rats

—Sad Cases of Uphill Fights Against Fortune.

By Hawkeye of *The Melbourne Herald*

The Melbourne Herald, Thursday 30 April 1891:

The somewhat alarming statements made recently by Dr Strong with regard to the wretched homes of the Collingwood poor, have drawn attention to what is a sad phase of our social life.

His stories concerning the squalor and abject misery to be found in the lanes, minor streets and courts of Collingwood, have been combated by municipal authorities. They have also insinuated that Dr Strong's statements are overcolored and exaggerated.

I have just returned from paying a visit to these homes, and now propose to write a plain and unvarnished account of my experiences amongst the "submerged tenth."

As a guide and companion I was fortunate enough to have Mrs Goldstein, a gentlewoman who is devoted to charitable work, and whose good deeds are proclaimed by the poor. Mrs [Isabella] Goldstein is the lady who piloted Dr Strong through the slums of Collingwood, and made him acquainted with their insanitary surroundings, and the vice and misery that existence in them endangers.

Property owners in this district nurse hostile feelings towards Dr Strong. They are averse to having any light thrown on the condition of their properties. Some of the owners have gone so far as to visit their unfortunate tenants and rate them roundly for making complaints. The poor have been told that "if they don't like the houses they had better leave."

In the majority of cases the threat had the desired effect. The poor have apologised and promised to make no more complaints about their hovels. For this reason, to save struggling men and women from the anger of infuriated landlords, I shall give neither names nor addresses. At the same time, both the names of the streets and the numbers of the houses can be supplied.

The cry of the poor throughout the inspection was "Don't say you were here, sir, if you do we will be turned out." In every case, on Mrs Goldstein's assurance that they would not be betrayed, we were admitted and shown the "homes."

A is one of four houses. All of them consist of two rooms, and they have but one entrance, and no back door. They face a stable, the drainage from which runs in front of the houses. Their rental is six shillings weekly. The door of one house is open. The furniture consists of a table and a chair. A piece of mouldy bread and a well scraped bone are on the table.

A boy about 10 years old sits on the dirty floor, staring in an apathetic way at the damp wall. He says "I'm waiting for father." "Father" can get no work, is a widower, and the lot of the boy appears to be deplorable. No provision has been made for ventilation, and the stench of stale water beneath the floors of the house is unbearable. As the stable is made with bluestone pitchers there is little doubt that much of its refuse must make its way under these houses.

B is said to be the best house in the court, of which it forms a part. This court is just off one of the principal streets in Collingwood. It consists, like the rest of the houses, of two rooms, with only one entrance. It is occupied by a hard working woman and her husband.

All of the houses, some eight or nine, face onto the court, which is used by thirty five persons as a common and general yard. The drainage is abominable. The dirty drainage water, the filth and slops from the houses percolate everywhere. In hot weather, the smell arising from the openings in the pitchers is said to be enough to breed a plague. The court is reached by a narrow lane, full of rubbish, cabbage stalks, old bones, bottles etc.

An ordinary person, accustomed to the privacy of his own back yard, might imagine that the court would be lively at times, and that hot, neighborly brawls would be of common occurrence. Such is not, however, the case.

Mrs Goldstein says it's astonishing how the poor keep to themselves even in such a crowded place as this. When they close their front and only door they regard their two rooms as their castle. At the end of the lane, in the main street, is a wooden building, almost tumbling down. Till recently it was a bad house frequented by low characters. These have been turned out, and the shanty is now waiting for a fresh tenant. The rent of the houses in the court is 6s 6d.

C and D are two of a wooden terrace of six houses inspected. These dwellings have three rooms. The front room looks out onto a main street, the second room onto a kitchen, the kitchen onto a yard where you could not swing a cat. C is the end house of a terrace and is considered the best. All the filthy drainage of the terrace runs through the back yard of this house, within four feet of the door.

Recently in the 5th dwelling a case of typhoid occurred. The drainage from this case, of course, ran past all the houses into a side street. The occupants of the end house had the full benefit of the germs floating about. A man, his wife and the two children occupy the dwelling. The woman, when we knock at the door, was dressed in mourning. She has just buried her eldest daughter through typhoid, and she has another child just recovering from its effects.

One of the houses, which, we are informed, is far and away the worst of the block, is closed, the tenant being out. If, however, it is worse than D it is bad indeed. D is occupied by a widow with two children. She works all day at a laundry. She has a holiday today and is, as she says, "cleaning up." "Did you ever," she says, "see such a house? and eight shillings a week for them. Just look through them. 'If I don't like it I can go,' is what old _____ says to me. And if I ain't got my rent he'll throw my few sticks, and me after them, into the street."

She tells us that she has only to lift the boards to show pools of water beneath the houses. She draws our attention to the damp walls, shows where the water has come down into the room where it has oozed up through the hearth stones, and how, by lifting up a colored print she has nailed to the wall, you can see into the next room. The plaster, laths and walls are broken everywhere. A window is out, holes abound in the floor and everything is in an advanced state of dilapidation and decay.

“Out of these holes,” the dame says, “the rats scamper by the dozen. They jump on my bed, run over my face, and often keep me awake at night. We are infested with them. Why don’t I move, you say? Because I can’t. I can’t spare a day. I can’t get another house. What can a poor woman do?”

The poor’s landlord is anybody but a popular person. They look upon him, as indeed he is, responsible for the condition of the houses and hate him because he will not make any repairs or improvements. They know their choice is Hobson’s—that if they don’t like their tenements they can leave. The landlord knows only too well the inability of the poor to compel them to spend money on repairs, and so houses continue to exist and be occupied that are a protest against health and a bane to civilisation.

These houses described may be said to be rented by the provisional poor, that is, men and women who are struggling to make ends meet, and who contrive fairly well to keep their heads above water. Where, however, the slightest dissipation is indulged in, where either the mother or father takes strong drink, misery of the worst kind follows. The borderline between want and the poor is so very narrow that improvidence soon reduces a poor home to the utmost straits. A few days out of work is enough to send a family back for weeks, and entail upon them severe self-denial.

Mrs Goldstein’s formula with the poor is, “Well Mrs _____? How are you? Is your husband at work?” “No he’s not” is in a great many cases the sad and almost despairing reply. “We’re getting awful behind hand. We were a shilling short of rent last week. I’m doing a little washing, but with baby it’s hard to wash.” Or yet another woman’s reply, “Jim got two days last week, the first for six weeks. It was only eight shillings, but it was something.”

To look at these homes is pitiful. One of them faces onto a dirty right-of-way. Like some of the other houses, it has only one door. The drainage about the place is

something frightful. The water lies in pools. The house is in the last stage of decay and is certainly unfit for habitation. It is one of three in similar condition, all inhabited by working men out of work.

E is a house of two rooms, filthy in the extreme. It is occupied by a boot hand, who works at home, and his wife. The spouting about the house is all broken. One pipe pours the rainwater into pools beneath it, from whence the water finds its way under the house. A strong gust of wind would blow the house over. Its companion alongside has already been condemned. So far as the ordinary observer can judge, there is not the slightest choice between the two houses.

The tenant explains the reason his domicile escaped condemnation at the hands of the municipal authorities. "You see," he says, "I planted these geraniums alongside the house, and the roots of them have bound together, and they sucks the water up as goes under the house." This explanation he deemed entirely satisfactory, and he hoped it satisfied us. He half thought I was some sanitary expert who was about to sweep all the wretched hovels out of the lane. Would that I had the power!

Mrs Goldstein is anxious to see his wife. The boot hand says "she's just gone out, twenty minutes ago. Somewhere down there, couldn't describe exactly to you." Sodden with cheap colonial beer, he tries to deceive us.

At the time of our arrival his wife, a friend and himself are making merry over the money he has just earned by piecework. In all probability they will save their rent, four shillings, and drink the rest of the wages, for the house is known as a 'wet' house in more ways than one.

"I don't want charity, I want work" is the statement made by an able-bodied man to Mrs Goldstein. "Oh, yes" he says, "have a look at my 'home.' It has two rooms. The furniture consist of a broken chair, a table, and what the man terms his bed.

The house is in a shocking state of repair. Paper and canvas hang in shreds from the roof, and paper dangles down the walls. Water has washed off numerous patches, and has poured through the ceiling like a shower-bath. Falling on the floor it has found its way through the holes beneath the house, where it has finally lodged to emit the smell which greets us.

The man is sullen and downcast. He can get no work, though he is said to be skilled in his trade, that of painter. He has not been able to pay his rent this week—four

shillings—and his chair, table and bed are to be seized next week if he is behind hand.

Few purchasers would care about giving four shillings for his furniture. Beyond the chair and bed he has a kettle and pan, but he lacks any food to place in the pan. A piece of boiled mutton is all that stands between him and starvation.

As regards the rent he is in such need of, Mrs Goldstein tells him how it can be arranged, and with reference to work, he is told to keep his spirits up.

Those who have not seen the bed rock of poverty cannot realise the moral courage some of the men, whom fortune sports with, possess. The tales of their trials are untold, the history of their tribulations unwritten.

Take this man for instance crushed by fortunes, and who threatens to sink lower and lower. For months he has struggled with discomfiture, distress and the wretchedness of despair. Day after day he has known what it is to tramp and tramp in search of work, and night after night he has returned home to this miserable dwelling with the heart almost crushed out of him by repeated failures to obtain employment.

Still he fights on, not yet habituated to degradation and dependence. “Work must come some time,” he says, “and I don’t want charity!” “I know that,” says Mrs Goldstein, kindly, “and we’ll not offer you charity.”

The destitution of women with large families is the most painful topic in connection with the Collingwood poor. In the great number of cases the women are so helpless, and even when they can earn wages the amount is so small as to be quite inadequate for the maintenance of themselves and their families. Deserted wives and widows constitute the principal class of women who become burdens on the purses of the philanthropic.

Amongst the poor, wife desertion is very common, and, in writing of the poor of Collingwood, I might multiply cases of heartrending distress. Some of the women are very brave under their misfortunes. They stand by their large families, which their cowardly husbands have left them as legacies, in a manner almost heroic.

Several deserted wives have had a hard time since the “sweating system” was exposed. In every case the work has been taken from them, and no persuasion will induce the manufacturers to restore their favors. The result of this adamant

decision is that greater misery is forced upon innocent women and hapless children.

We visit a young woman who is slaving from early morn till late at night. She is a tent maker, and earns ordinary weeks ten shillings, and exceptionally good weeks twelve shillings.

She has six children, the oldest not much above six years old, to keep on the ten shillings, supplemented by two shillings from the local Ladies Benevolent Society. Her husband is a hopeless lunatic confined in the Kew Asylum. It will be seen by this what value a shilling possesses, and how far it will go when judiciously used amongst the poor.

Another poor woman we visit, a trouser finisher, has the most beautiful child I ever saw. She is a girl about 13, and rushes forward to Mrs Goldstein with a bunch of chrysanthemums. Ten shillings and twelve shillings is the most the trouser finisher can earn, and she looks as if the Song of the Shirt had crushed all of the life out of her. Still she toils bravely on for the sake of her child.

Perhaps the saddest part of this inspection is the conclusions that are forced upon one with regard to the ultimate future of those youngsters whom Fate has decreed shall be reared up in these places. If they escape moral contamination, they can hardly avoid having the seeds of disease sown in their physical being.

The home of the trouser finisher from the outside appears to be fairly habitable. Within, however, its insanitary condition is too apparent. There is, as usual, the stagnant water beneath the floors, and the rain beats through the doors and windows, flooding the little home.

These examples of miserable homes might be greatly extended. Mrs Goldstein pointed out to me house after house which ought to be condemned as unfit for human habitation. She told me dreadful tales of overcrowding, of cases where as many as fourteen people occupied a small house with a case of typhoid amongst them.

I might quote all of these, as well as set forth more fully the slavery that is endured by the struggling women to keep their bodies and souls together did I not feel that enough has been written to show that there is "something" in what Dr Strong has said and that his statements are not overcolored with regard to the way in which the Collingwood poor live.

Part 2: 1916



Miss Goldstein & Miss John collecting for workless women at Flinders Street.
Woman Voter 23 February 1915.

DROP PARCELS HERE FOR WORKLESS WOMEN, CLOTHES AND MATERIALS.
Blocks lent kindly by the "Herald."

UNEMPLOYMENT/PROHIBITIVE FOOD PRICES IN MELBOURNE 1916

Women's Political Association (W.P.A.), Women's Labour Bureau, 215 Latrobe Street, Melbourne

Woman Voter Thursday 17 February 1916:

The *Argus* says... "There is something working like madness in the brain of unionism. Strikes have become epidemic."

We are in a position to know that that "something" is the fact that the unionist's wife and children are being deprived of a fair share of the necessities of life, because of the gambling in them that is being indulged in all over the world.

Take a typical case—one of the many at our Women's Labour Bureau. A man, with a wife and six children (the eldest under 11) to support, gets 30/- a week. He is a steady, reliable, clever workman, but is in bad health from lack of nourishing food; the wife and children are also suffering from the same cause. They pay 13/6 a week for a wretched house, without a back yard. Will any of our readers tell us how the family is to be [housed] fed and clothed on 16/6 a week? Will they be surprised that "there is something working like madness in the brain" of whom we write?

Other cases:

“The best and freest country on God’s earth.”— W M Hughes, Prime Minister of Australia

Mrs M—Husband out of work six months except three weeks at Neerim South on railway work. He bought tent and paid all expenses for his wife and three young children to accompany him. After three weeks the work was stopped indefinitely. Mr N now stonebreaking, but will not receive pay for three weeks (pay day only once a fortnight). They pay 9/- for one room infested with rats. Three children under 7 years. Mrs H—Husband bootmaker; gets very little work; four children—two boys, 13 and 11; two little girls 5 and 2½. Wife earns 12/- weekly by relief work and charing. Ladies’ Benevolent Society gives family food order for 5/- weekly. Family pays 7/- for three rooms.

Miss C—dressmaker, over 50. Only earns 8/- at our bureau. She pays 5/- for room, and lives upon 3/- for food and clothes. Dislikes charity, but sometimes has to take food tickets from Ladies Benevolent Society.

Mrs B—Two children; living in one room. Husband cab driver; no work. Wife earning 8/- at bureau. Mrs B has been parting with household goods for food.

And Then:

Woman Voter Thursday 24 February 1916, page 1:

We readily imagine that in Belgium parents and children are herded together in a single room, living upon a scanty supply of bread, with jam or syrup and a little tea, unable to renew their clothing or to afford anything for the decencies, comforts or pleasures of life.

It was to relieve such distress that thousands of pounds were collected to send to Belgium from the generous public of Australia. But who would ever guess that here, 13,000 miles from the conflict, in a country rich in every product of the earth, blessed by a bounteous harvest, famine conditions should prevail?

Surrounded by plenty, women and their children are almost without bread, and in a rich and a spacious land hundreds of families are herded in abject poverty, crowded into dwellings wherein it is impossible that the barest decencies can prevail.

The story of this Australian tragedy is best told by the hard facts revealed by the family budgets, which have been collected by the Women’s Labour Bureau.

A selection of typical cases of semi-starvation follows:—

Mrs A—(No. 79)—Husband dead; children three—15, 10 and 4 years. (N.B.—little girl is a cripple.) Earnings: Son, 15/- weekly (occasionally); mother, 8/- weekly at Labour Bureau. Spends weekly: Rent 8/-; Bread 2/4½; Dripping 3d.; Sugar 1s.; Tea; 6d.; Jam 3½d.; Soap 2d.; Soda 1½d.; Salt 1d.; Matches ½d.; Kerosene 2d.; Blacking 2d.; Blacklead ½d.; Vegetables 1½d.; Boots 2/-; School materials 3d.; Church 1½d.; Sunday School and Children's Creche 8d. Total: 16/4½. Mrs A has no money for clothes, nor for meat, nor butter, nor milk. Her little boy gathers wood for cooking. She has clothes given her, or, if she earns a little extra, buys something at an old clothes' dealer, or at a jumble sale. House very neat, children clean, but ragged and badly nourished.

Mrs B—(No.53)—Husband dead; children, two, boy and girl (10 and 13 years). Earnings: Mother, 10/- weekly; Children's board from State, 12/- weekly. House, 3 rooms. Spends Weekly: Rent 8/-; Bread 3/-; Milk 1/-; Meat 2/-; Butter 5d.; Dripping 6d.; Sugar 8d.; Tea 8d.; Soap 3d.; Salt ½d.; Kerosene 3d.; Vegetables 1/-; Coal 9d.; Wood 9d.; Fares (to work) 1/-; Boots 2/-; Clothes 1/-; School Materials 3d. Total: £1/3/6½. Mrs B has clothes given her. Sometimes she earns a little more, and then she buys food. The boy is delicate and requires milk and butter. She bought blankets at W.P.A. for 15/- on the hire system, otherwise would have no bedding. Mrs B has a weak heart.

Mrs C—(No.13)—Husband, dead; children, two (11 and 17 years). Earnings: Mother, 14/-; daughter, 4/-. Spends Weekly: Rent 11/-; Bread 2/4; Meat 2/-; Dripping 2½; Soap 3d.; Salt ½d.; Kerosene 2d.; Matches 1d.; Sugar 6d.; Tea 3d.; Jam 7d.; Starch 1d.; Vegetables 3d.; Fares (to work) 1/ Total 18/10. Mrs C has no money for clothes or boots, but has to depend on what is given to her. The girls are clean and tidy, but the elder, when only 16, became a mother. The father of the baby is in prison, so the girl can get nothing from him. Is devoted to child.

Mrs D—(No.83)—Husband dead; children, two (6½ and 4 years). Earnings: Mother, 13/-. House, 4 rooms. Spends Weekly: Rent 10/-; Bread 2/-; Milk 1/5½; Sugar 4½; Jam 6½; Rice 2½; Soap 3d.; Salt ½d.; Candles 1d.; Kerosene 8d.; Matches 1d.; Blacking ½d.; Starch 1d.; Vegetables 2d.; Boots 1/- Fares (to work) 1/-. Total 18/-. Mrs D gets an order from L.B.S. for 3/- worth of groceries. She earns sometimes a little more or less than 13/-. Very tidy, clean and cheerful. Nothing available for meat, clothing or other necessities.

Mrs E—(No.6)—Husband dead; children, two (14 and 12 years). Rooms occupied 1. Earnings: Mother 12/6; son 5/-. Spends Weekly: Rent 7/6; Bread 2/6; Meat & Milk 3/9; Sugar 9d.; Tea 9d.; Jam 7d.; Rice and Sago 7d.; Soap 3d.; Salt 2d.; Soda 2d.; Kerosene 3d.; Candles 2d.; Blacking ½d.; Potatoes 2/- (not every week, but occasionally); Vegetables 2/- (not every week, but occasionally); Wood 1/7; School materials 6d.Total: £1/4/6. Mrs E gets 2/6 weekly from L.B.S. in groceries; nothing for clothes and other necessities.

Mrs F—(No.52)—Husband (German Settler) was fitter, able to earn £3 weekly; out of work for months. Children, six (14, 12, 10, 9, 7, 2). Rooms occupied, five. Earnings: Wife, 8/-. Spends Weekly: Rent 13/-; Bread 3/-; Meat 1/6; Milk 1/-; Butter 1/-; Cheese 6d.; Eggs 1/-; Sugar 9d.; Tea 9d.; Oatmeal 3d.; Sago 3d.; Flour 6d.; Soap 1d.; Kerosene 1/-; Blacking 3d.; Vegetables 1/-; Wood 6d.; School Materials 1/-; Church (Children) 6d. Medicine 1/-. Total: £1/8/10. This family has been living on past savings, now all exhausted; husband earns a little; nationality against him, although naturalised and has lived in Australia for many years; wife Australian. Children and parents have been without food days at a time; mother very clean and tidy, baby coming.

It would be impossible to give a detailed statement of all the cases which we could disclose to an inquirer—but these are enough to show the deplorable condition into which our own people have fallen. The poor mothers who have to earn the few shillings which keep the spark of life within themselves and their children are doing so to the serious injury of their own health. The children who need their care must suffer from neglect.

Last week a distracted mother went from hospital to hospital trying to get her baby admitted, because it was impossible for her to nurse it, through a serious illness. When at last a bed was found it was too late to save it. The whole family and this child included have been short of food for the last 12 months.

Another young mother, deserted by her soldier sweetheart, put her baby out to nurse while she took a situation without him. She learned that the baby was ill, and returned to find him suffering from a terrible infectious complaint, and covered with sores. She tried in vain, for more than a week, to get the poor child into a hospital.

Another mother, earning a few shillings, has a delicate son, her eldest child. He requires milk and good food, but she can only give him tea and bread and jam, although she is working her fingers to the bone.

All the children concerned in some thousand cases which have come under our notice are underfed, and suffering in consequence. In many homes, the only wage-earners beside the mother are young children, apprentices and improvers in various trades. They have to maintain their parents and brothers and sisters, going to work insufficiently fed and clothed, without a penny for themselves after working hard all week.

Many young girls—dressmakers, white workers, and other factory workers and shop assistants—are, out of their poor wages, supporting the whole of their families, mother, father, brothers and sisters.

Their pale faces, narrow chests and stooping shoulders show how heavy this burden is. It is painful to think that while large profits are being earned for their employers, the girls themselves are pinched for food, and are either denied proper clothes and natural enjoyment, or must rely upon men friends for all necessities for healthy youth.

It is hardly to be expected that a large proportion of these girls will not succumb to the temptation which the presence of well-paid and unoccupied soldiers offers. Their natural desire to seek some relaxation from the tedious work and poor homes will lead them into company in which they will need more self-restraint and wisdom than is frequently found amongst inexperienced, badly educated girls.

The streets of Melbourne are at present an appalling sight as soon as dusk falls, and thousands of children are living in the little streets off Swanston, Elizabeth, Lonsdale, Latrobe and Bourke streets, who have no playground but the gutters.

They stand in groups and watch drunken soldiers and abandoned women behaving in an unseemly manner, and pick up vile language from them. It is not an uncommon thing to see ragged little children playing in the gutters of the lanes behind our bureau with some half-starved dog or cat.

The condition of these lanes is so bad that we cannot use the back entrance after nightfall, and even in broad daylight disorderly conduct has been indulged in by men and women there.

The children must see all that goes on, and no sight of filth and drunkenness can be unknown to them. Little boys and girls, the members of these unfortunate families, sell the "Herald" nightly, taking their stand in the worst parts of the city, where men and women solicit for immoral purposes...

Under these conditions it is impossible for the Melbourne children to retain the purity of mind which keeps them healthy, mentally and physically.

In view of all these facts, we ask our readers—especially those who consider the "Woman Voter" unpatriotic—is it not possible to win the war and yet to lose the souls of our own people, by continuing the struggle when the brunt of it is borne by the mothers and young children who are now being sacrificed for military victories?

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archer, Bongiorno, Frank
The Conscription Conflict and the Great War MUP 2016

Bomford, Janette M, *Vida Goldstein, That Dangerous and Persuasive Woman* MUP 1990

Cahill, Carmen, *Bad Faith: A Story of Family and Fatherland* Vintage 2006

Callahan, Brienne *They Are But Women the road to female suffrage in Victoria* Uni. Melbourne 2007

Curlewis, Joan D'Aprano, *Zelda, Zelda Spinifex* 1977

Fraser, Frances; Palmer Nettie, ed.
Centenary Gift Book 1934

Goldstein, Vida, *To America and Back; Woman Suffrage in Australia* reprinted VWT; papers, London

Henry, Alice, *Marching towards Citizenship* Centenary Gift Book 1934

Lake, Marilyn; Farley, Kelly, ed.
Double Time, Women in Victoria 150 Years Penguin 1985

Lake, Marilyn; Reynolds, Henry,
What's Wrong with ANZAC UNSW Press 2010

Leslie M Henderson, *The Goldstein Story*, Stockland Press 1973 *Vida Goldstein* SLV 1966

McCorkindale, ed. *Pioneer Pathways Sixty Years of Citizenship 1887-1947* WCTU 1948

McMurphy, Megan et al *For Love or Money a pictorial history of women and work in Australia* Penguin 1981

Martin, Sylvia, *Passionate Friends* Onlywomen Press, London 2001

Oldfield, Audrey, *Woman Suffrage in Australia*: CUB 1992

Rayner, Moira, *Rooting Democracy* Allen & Unwin 1997

Scates, Bruce & Frances, Raelene
Women & the Great War CUP 1997

Smith, Yvonne, ed. *Taking Time a women's historical kit*, Union of Australian Women 1988

Sparrow, Jeff and Jill, *Radical Melbourne* Vulgar Press 2001

Windschuttle, Elizabeth, ed. *Women, Class and History* Fontana 1980

WPA *The Life and Work of Miss Vida Goldstein* SLV [1908?]

Australian Humanities Review
Australian Women and the Vote CUP

Vida Goldstein papers, Betty Rischbieth

Jus Suffragii

Labour History Conf. Uni. Melb. 2015

Maurice Blackburn papers, SLV

Review of Reviews, 1903

Suffrage Conference, Uni. Mel. 2007

The Adelaide Register

The Age

The Argus

The Australian Women's Sphere

The Herald

The Military Journal

The Sydney Morning Herald

The Woman

Women's Lib in 1898 MS11379 SLV

Women's Org's. 1890-1908, 1968 SLV

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am proud to acknowledge the main source of this book, the *Woman Voter*, and the magnificent women from the Women's Political Association. I thank them for living at that time, a time of rapid social change that is so much like today. I thank them for being who they were and for all they stood for, even when I don't agree with them.

I would like to show my respect, to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Land and give special thanks to changemakers, past and present. Most of the Bunurong Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples of the Eastern Kulin Nation had been forcibly displaced by the time these events took place.¹⁵

I would also like to thank you, the reader, too. It is not viable for me to continue to check sources where they are physically held at a library and not available online, or where they are taken from a book that I don't own.

There are many gaps in this story, some due to missing copies of the *Woman Voter*, some not. There are expressions that lead nowhere that we would recognise. I cannot avoid this and thank you for your patience.

Holly Gurling did the lion's work on the editing as well as so much more. I certainly could and would not have compiled *Changing the World* without her support and encouragement. I also would like to acknowledge and thank my son, Tony Rimmer, for his patient support.

Geraldine Robertson

¹⁵ First Australians-Freedom for Our Lifetime-Episode 3 wurundjeri.com.au — Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Work - Cultural & Educational Services - Land Management

SOME WOMEN'S WEB PUBLICATIONS

Geraldine Robertson (compiler) 2017

Melbourne, Bloody Melbourne: the peace day that wasn't

Geraldine Robertson (compiler) 2017

Making Peace: stopping all that leads to war

Geraldine Robertson (compiler) 2013

Prejudice and Reason: some Australian women's responses to war

Geraldine Robertson (compiler) 2012

Betrayal, Women's Paid Work 1874-1974: a story of betrayals

Geraldine Robertson (compiler) 2009

Women Working Together suffrage and onwards

Geraldine Robertson (compiler) 2007

International Women's Day in Melbourne 8th March: our story

Geraldine Robertson (compiler) 2004

Women's Web: being the second part of an ongoing series

Geraldine Robertson (compiler) 2002

Women's Web: being the first part of an ongoing series

Other publications compiled by Geraldine Robertson

Geraldine Robertson (compiler) 2021

Some Coronavirus Notes

Geraldine Robertson (compiler) 2018

Aged Care Reform: We can do better—a proposal

Geraldine Robertson (compiler) 2016

Our Foremothers: one social history

Geraldine Robertson (compiler) 2015

That Purple Place at Rye: 1982-2002, 30 years of sisterhood

Geraldine Robertson (compiler) 2004

Thomas O'Brien: History and Personal Incidents of My Life

Geraldine Robertson (compiler) 2000

Speaking out against Corporate Globalisation

“What a truly eye-opening account of trailblazing women. The synthesis of accounts reflects how far we have come, yet how much there is still to do. So thank you, early changemakers, I hope we can do you proud.”

Hannah Kammerhofer

“They fought for greater equality, peace, and social justice. Jeannie Marsh We can see clearly that these women were not as they were portrayed to be, then (by anti-feminists and the ‘Jingo Press’) and now (in our traditional history books and collective memory).

This approach of documenting history enables these powerful women to speak for themselves, holding steady to the truth within direct sources. Without this approach, recent Australian history (or herstory) may be recast in the new language and meanings of the times; the resonances with our lives, lost.”

Holly Gurling

“Geraldine Robertson has woven a rich quilt for her readers. Some of the quilt’s patches help us to understand the courage and critical intelligence of women who fought for women’s rights during the early decades of the 20th century. Other patches reflect our current circumstances in that the struggle for world peace seems as elusive today as it was in Vida

Goldstein’s time.

There are also quotes touching on a previous global pandemic of influenza that will resonate with any reader now.”

Peter Ronge

“Opens a door that’s largely been (purposefully been?) closed for so long. A fascinating insight. A valuable guide.”

Mary Kenneally OAM