

Adela Pankhurst, Peace Negotiator: World War 1, Queensland

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The responses of Australian women's suffrage leaders in Australia to World War 1 is largely untold except through their biographies. This article revisits the anti-war advocacy of Adela Pankhurst, a member of the leading English suffragette family, when she toured Queensland as a Women's Peace Army organiser, in 1915, and 1916. Adela Pankhurst's life and work has had a mixed representation by her biographers and in accounts of her family. In this detailed study of her tours in Queensland, when her life story is viewed through both the lens of state histories and the international campaign against war as a means of solving conflict, her importance as a leading public intellectual emerges.

Introduction

Accounts of the Australian women's suffrage movement usually conclude with the successful achievement of the state vote for white women. The responses of the suffrage women leaders to World War 1 is hence under-researched and more often developed in biographies of leading figures in Australia. In countries where the women's vote was achieved later, national narratives of suffrage struggles, in contrast, do include issues of war and peace. This article revisits the anti-war work of Adela Pankhurst, a member of the leading English suffragette family, when she toured Queensland as a Women's Peace Army organiser in 1915, and 1916. Adela Pankhurst's life and work has had a mixed reception by her biographers. She has been called, on the one hand, a betrayer of the Australian working-class, and on the other represented recently as a worthy adversary of the wartime Prime Minister Billy Hughes. When her life story before her marriage is viewed through both the lens of state histories and the international campaign against war as a means of solving conflict, her importance as a leading public intellectual emerges, as does the significance of her overlooked book *Put Up the Sword*. The senior labour women leaders and veteran suffrage campaigners in Queensland capitalised on Adela Pankhurst's high profile as a suffragette and speaker to initially establish formal leadership of a mass-

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based anti-war movement and, on her second visit, to gain a hearing with the powerful Queensland trade union movement (which then in turn went on to take a leading role in calling for a negotiated end to World War 1).

Adela Pankhurst toured Queensland twice during World War 1, as a Women's Peace Army [WPA] organiser. The WPA, a Victorian organisation, called for arbitration to resolve international disputes, supported the abolition of compulsory military training, and advocated a general reduction of armaments (Summy 2014). They were affiliated with the Women's International League, which held a gathering of 1300 women leaders opposed to war in 1915. On both of Adela's trips to Queensland from the Melbourne WPA headquarters, Adela was accompanied by Cecilia John, the secretary of the WPA. They were the catalysts for the formal establishment of the Brisbane branch of the Women's Peace Army [WPA] and an umbrella group, the Brisbane Council of the Australian Peace Alliance [APA] on their November 1915 tour. On their second visit in August 1916, meetings were arranged in Brisbane, Gympie, Mount Morgan, Ipswich, Rockhampton and Bundaberg where new regional groups were forming. Meetings were also arranged for Adela to speak directly with the labour delegates in conference; and, as a result, trade unions began to affiliate with the APA. It was hoped their tours would raise funds to ensure women delegates from Australia attended the Women's International League conference to be held in parallel with the treaty negotiations to end the war.

Australian (and New Zealand) configurations of the struggle for suffrage rarely extend into the years of World War 1, that is except through the biographies of the key suffragists such as Vida Goldstein, Emma Miller, or Rose Scott. In contrast, given that British women only won the vote sixteen years later in 1918, studies of European women's suffrage movements include the period of World War 1. The lives and militancy of the Pankhurst family — Emmeline, Christabel, and Sylvia— and the Women's Social and Political Union [WSPU] and Sylvia's breakaway East London Federation of Suffragettes are often central to British narratives of the broader women's movement. Research on American suffrage also combines suffragists' responses to war and peace. In a wider context, of how Australian women suffragists, having won the vote, responded to World War 1, Adela Pankhurst stands out, given her suffragette experience, her emigration to Australia in 1914, and her outspoken position, as a pacifist, on World War 1. To date Adela's tours to Queensland have only warranted brief mention.

In discussing the lives of independent and self-defined women, Kathleen Barry warns how often a woman's history is rewritten and her character re-

shaped 'punitively twisting her will, bending her image, and distorting her identity; her defiance appears as a deformity—an aberration of nature' (1992, 24). In the early days of women's liberation and the search for revolutionary forebears, another generation sought to retrieve Adela Pankhurst, but her later responses to feminism, communism, and empire 'puzzled' them, according to Anne Summers (1978). Summers believed that, in the 1970s, biographers did not have the conceptual tools to understand Adela's radical swings between political allegiances (48). Verna Coleman's important pioneering biography *Adela Pankhurst: the Wayward Suffragette 1885-1961* (1996), is an early mapping, but as argued in the following pages, hardly grapples with the full implications of Adela's pacifism. Early biographies of the Pankhurst family and WSPU overlooked the youngest daughter, part of wider ignorance about the southern hemisphere; later biographies by English scholars relied on Coleman's biography. Australian historians Joy Damousi and Jacqueline Dickenson address Adela's life in context of the 'radical swings' and her political views after her marriage (Damousi 1993, 422ff; Dickenson 2006, 162ff); more recently scholars have revisited her internationalist pacifist position. Geraldine Fela (2017) shows how Pankhurst was indeed a worthy spokesperson for the increasingly radicalised women's and labour movement through her role in the anti-conscription campaign.

Contested, rival and counter narratives are needed, especially given the last decades of transnational histories that have opened up new ways of seeing Australia's past. Historiographical configurations of World War 1 have shifted over the decades from firstly, a military and diplomatic focus; secondly, social (with an emphasis on conflict as in the work of Ray Evans); and thirdly, to new cultural understandings (Winter 2005, passim). Counter narratives about women in contrast to the stories of the heroic struggles of the ANZACs are still rare in Australian histories.

Crucial in this interpretation of Adela Pankhurst is the Queensland print culture during World War 1. Brisbane's major newspaper was a labour movement daily, the *Daily Standard*, which included detailed accounts of anti-war advocates as far as possible under wartime censorship which blocked material 'prejudicial to recruiting'. A second newspaper, the *Truth*, employed a perspicacious woman journalist. On the other hand, the conservative press was 'blood-thirsty' and 'war-loving' ('Miss Pankhurst's Tour' 1916). Every-one had heard of the exploits of the militant suffragette Pankhurst family, even if they were unaware of the differences; the two pacifist and internationalist sisters, Adela and Sylvia, came to oppose their patriotic mother Emmeline and eldest sister Christabel who turned their

considerable energies into supporting England's war effort. Many in the Queensland audiences came to hear Adela 'out of curiosity to see what the result would be' given she was touted in the press to be 'pro Hun' and a traitor ('Miss Pankhurst's Address' 1916).

Adela, like other participants of the women's movement, believed passionately that the women's vote would usher in significant social and economic reform, even end wars. Adela was a brilliant orator and campaigner, extremely experienced in handling both adulation and rough crowds, from the time she first went out into provincial Britain espousing women's rights. Feminists who advocated international arbitration of disputes, had gained invaluable experience from their long suffrage campaign since the 1880s. As the youngest Pankhurst daughter, Adela had invariably been drawn in to fighting for the women's cause. Educated at an elite Manchester girls' college while her barrister father was alive, she was influenced by his opposition to the Boer war and his promotion of internationalism. After he died, the family could not afford her university education. In 1906, when twenty-one years old, she became a paid organiser for the WSPU. She was first arrested in 1911: "I had no fear when I arose in the hall, and was merely desirous of carrying through what I thought to be my duty" ('Political Outlaws' 1914). After asking a question at a political meeting in Manchester, she was thrown out. For obstructing the pathway, she served a week in goal. Adela was jailed again, for two months, after smashing windows at the House of Commons.

Adela was exposed to the full horrors of physical and mental abuse by bystanders and police. She was among the first group of imprisoned suffragettes to go on hunger strike, while the WSPU organiser for Scotland. Suffragettes developed tactics to initiate immediate arrest to avoid police violence. In Edinburgh, they were sent home in an ambulance by the authorities 'anxious less they should die'. "Yes, it was very painful," replied Adela, in answer to an interview reported at length in Brisbane's *Daily Standard*: "Much the worst part of it was abstaining from water. Some people find it more painful than others, but it is agony to every-body" ('Political Martyrs'). Some of her companions were later to die after being force fed.

The reasons why Adela moved to Australia were unclear to previous interpreters of her life. Adela told the reporter she was targeted once she was known to the British authorities. It was difficult to escape notoriety. "One can do so little in England now without undergoing arrest," said Adela. Repeated arrest was "serious for health and altogether a painful

proceeding". "That is partly why I have come for a time to Australia" ('Political Martyrs'). In Melbourne, leading feminist Vida Goldstein offered her work, first in the Women's Political Association, then as a WPA organiser in Melbourne in 1914. Adela was a feminist leader seeking to be effective but targeted by the police.

When feminist leadership is portrayed as a matter of family politics, the political and intellectual integrity of Adela's position is less visible. In most versions of her life, Adela was 'crushed in spirit' and 'banished' to the 'colonies', by her powerful mother and sister (Pugh 2001, 288); that is, she is defined by the trope of colonialism in which Australia becomes the place of exile. Adela had 'withdrawn' presumably 'defeated', after a 'damaging schism' with Emmeline and Christabel over the WSPU's escalation in violence at the height of suffragette militarism. However, the reasons for Adela's resignation from the WSPU in 1912 are clear, given the WSPU began to attack private property (Coleman 1996, 47); by 1913 the WSPU destroyed 'money, property and pleasure' through arson and bombing of houses, schools and churches. Adela did not challenge the WSPU leadership about their use of violence, rather she turned to horticulture. In Australia, paradoxically, Adela became the spokesperson for the militant suffragettes, even though she had rejected their tactics of bombing and arson. Later she was to break more windows, and be imprisoned again (Damousi 1993, 422), but before her love affair with Tom Walsh and the trade union movement, she advocated non-violence. Even more, her work as a gardener enabled her to forge strong links with the WPA especially Cecilia John, a farmer, and Ina Higgins, a landscape architect.

Adela Pankhurst's anti-war writing

In July 1915, Adela's feminist analysis of the war *Put Up the Sword* was published. A mixture of political and economic history, international relations and journalistic critique, it was over 200 pages in length. Praised as the 'best book on the war' in *The Socialist* ('In the Library' 1918), it was reviled by a *Bulletin* reviewer as 'suffragist bias' requiring the attention of the censor ('Adela Pankhurst, Pro-Hun' 1915). When the youthful Nettie Palmer, who was later to become Australia's leading non-academic critic, reviewed it, clearly believing it worthwhile, she sought clarity on Adela's distinctions between internationalism, nationalism and nationality (N. P. 1918, 158). The book went into three editions, but it is virtually unavailable today. 'I have written this book' Adela wrote, 'with the object of setting forth the causes and disastrous social effects of war ... and of international

warfare promoted entirely in commercial interests' (Pankhurst 1915, 2). Adela could find no justification for violence:

A permanent civilisation can only be built upon a foundation of justice. The present system is a denial of justice. It gives way to the strong and tramples upon the weak, it stifles the cry of the oppressed, it gives unlimited advantage to the ruthless. It weakens the race by taking the strongest, healthiest and bravest of the young men, and stamping their lives out of them, leaving young women forlorn, and children fatherless. Today we watch 10 million men smashing what generations have built up. While they march and slay and burn they are fed and clothed by the labour of women and little children. (1915, 5)

The mistaken notion that this book was a 'tract' is repeated endlessly in accounts of Adela's work. British biographers often fail to address the issues of racism inherent in imperialism. Damousi and Dickenson point to Adela's supposed longstanding preoccupation with the domestic sphere, and an understanding of femininity as a eugenic safeguard for British "racial" purity in context of her later life choices (Damousi 1993, 422; Dickenson 2006, 162ff). As quoted above, Adela refers to the 'human' presumably white race, not merely the British race. While she was invariably steeped in the racial prejudices of our era with its often unquestioning acceptance of the superiority of whiteness, she could not challenge hegemonic beliefs about the nature of 'civilisation' and the 'primitive'.

Her book, however, needs to be framed in the context of the first configuration of histories of the war—in early debates about diplomacy, the nature of European militarism and Germany's supposed responsibility. Her not unsophisticated outline stemmed from a critique of modernity. Her ideas had been shaped by the great political debates in England preceding World War 1—George Bernard Shaw advocating the equality of women and exposing prostitution; Hilaire Belloc critiquing the servile state and the increasing regimentation of society through industrialisation; and the progressive Independent Labour Party [ILP] receptive to the creative ferment of European socialisms. A strand of ILP pre-war socialism held the family in high esteem and when Adela focused on the long-term detrimental social impacts of war on British (and German) women and children, it underscored her wider critique of violence, warfare and industrialisation.

For Adela, feminism was opposed to militarism. The stance of those who oppose war and violence are not readily visible when using analytic

categories of race, class and gender, albeit all important when addressing developments in Queensland. On her first visit in 1915, Adela promoted her new book. The main gist of Adela's argument was the need to stop the European war, negotiate for peace, establish permanent international tribunals and to 'learn that by our weapons we slay, not others only, but ourselves as well' (1915, 5). This was the message that was picked up and repeated by the progressive labour and women's press. This is what most of Adela's audiences came to hear. She was still learning how to script her speeches and stage them for Southern audiences, especially regional audiences, but her performances were reverberating across the country. Adela did not advocate violence as a strategy for either the WPA or for the trade union movement. When she was asked directly in Queensland about the soldier-led loyalist riots reaching serious proportions, she cautioned recourse to parliamentary procedures. She had the capacity to draw and hold the line at non-violent resistance, largely because of highly honed intellectual and emotional skills developed through her extraordinary experiences in her involvement in the British women's suffrage campaign, and her writing. All the copies of *Put Up the Sword* she brought to Brisbane sold out.

First Women's Peace Army Tour.

The public meetings when Adela spoke, in November 1915, were used to establish the Brisbane branch of the Women's Peace Army [WPA] and the Australian Peace Alliance [APA]. Adela already had the reputation of being something of a terrorist, 'a tattered gamp' with 'incendiary bombs' (Coleman 1996, 66). Cecilia, eight years older, was also 'blessed with a compelling personality' and praised by her colleagues as having 'unique gifts as speaker, writer, organiser and statesman' ('Miss Cecilia John' 1918). The WPA delegation had been arranged by Mabel Lane and Emma Miller (Young 1991, 202). Miller, at the end of a long and active leadership, was called 'Mother Jones' by members of the women's movement. She was also a pacifist. Mabel Lane, wife of journalist Ernie Lane and sister-in-law of visionary William Lane, was an extremely capable socialist pacifist organiser in her own right (Jordan 2018, *passim*). The two veteran campaigners had embraced the young idealist Margaret Thorp. Thorp 'respected and admired her [Adela] extremely—her motives were genuine and ideals are truly Christian' (Thorp 1915). Just as Thorp 'provided the nexus which brought together the various factions in the struggle' against militarism (Summy, 2006, 81) in Queensland, Adela and Cecilia provided the catalyst.

The federal military intelligence began to keep a close watch. No undercover military personnel attended Adela's first lecture, 'Down with Germany' ('Adela Pankhurt's Passionate Plea' 1915) when an audience of 1400 people had been stirred 'to their heart's core' at her call for an International Court of Arbitration. After it, however, a deputation of men claiming to represent two hundred 'leading' Brisbane business-men harangued the military authorities demanding that Adela should be interned (Papers 1915). Censorship was to be particularly virulent in Queensland. Adela and Cecilia had 1000 song-sheets of the banned song "I didn't raise my son to be a soldier" with them, and on a river cruise, arranged by the labour women, they all sang. A warrant was issued to search the printer's office for further copies. Adela's next two lectures came under full surveillance.

Speaking on 'The Price of Empire' Adela continued with her theme that international warfare was a periodic event, because of shifting allegiances and the interdependence of nations through trade. 'Subject races are exploited to provide markets' for 'empires' (Papers 1915). And while the Brisbane Turrabal people might well have understood the rape of their land as the result of colonialism, the undercover agent thought Adela's ideas merely 'a clever and calculating appeal to workers and women to bring about change in the system' (Papers 1915). The fourth meeting of concerned citizens which saw the formation of a branch of the APA was also recorded.

One hundred Brisbane women attended a meeting to form the branch of the WPA on the 16 November 1915 ('Women's Peace Army' 1915). Cecilia spoke about the aims of the Victorian WPA, and similar organisations in America and Europe. Adela urged that women must be included in international diplomacy and the treaty negotiations at the end of the war. The meeting passed the motion to form a peace army almost unanimously. Among those present were courageous, mostly white women, senior leaders of the community, leaders of the labour movement, Quakers, and many with male relatives and lovers serving in the military. They were in contact with the International Women's Committee for Permanent Peace; facilitated trade union involvement; negotiated with the churches and other religious groups; involved key intellectual strongholds such as the Modernist Society; formed branches of a Children's Peace Army and the Sisterhood of International Peace [SIP]; and were to be active in the APA. Most importantly they mobilised the Workers' Political Organisations. The

coalition of women, which also included some of the first generation of university graduates, acted like a think tank providing speakers to groups across the city from the churches to the unions, in halls and on the streets; they engaged with the print culture providing written material for the daily press; they acted like a lobby group organising and leading deputations and writing letters to politicians; they acted as facilitators arranging, hosting and organising public and 'monster' meetings with visiting national and international speakers, and leading and arranging processions; and they liaised with and supported German, Russian and Austrian expatriates. They had a series of committees organising social events, relief, and fund-raising. They were hardly 'a tiny rebel band' as Evans queried (2004, 158). Chris Healy found in his wider study of the work of the peace movement that opposition to the war was *not* 'marginal politics' (1988, 208ff). Even more, the WPA was an arm of a global anti-war movement.

Given the failure of the women leaders in Australia to be elected to parliament until decades after World War 1, and decades after the vote was achieved, historians have long debated the impact of World War 1 on gender relations. The work of women, and men, dissenters is under researched, often partitioned off into 'peace studies'. Given the centrality of the labour movement, Queensland was a special case compared with other settler colonies. Senior labour women involved in the WPA drew on an existing network of Workers' Political Organisations, in which they often held executive positions, not highly visible except at the translocal level. There were numerous, and active, branches in most suburbs and towns across the state. Many labour women were in intimate relationships with senior Labor politicians, and Miller was on first name terms with most of the Cabinet.

While it might appear that Queensland women lacked a voice with no newspapers of their own, in contrast to the WPA 'headquarters' in Melbourne through the *Woman Voter* emerging as it was from an autonomous 'non-party' women's movement, this was not the case. In Brisbane, they had the labour papers, the *Daily Standard* and the *Worker*. Ellen Hewett sometime president of the Brisbane WPA had been a key figure in the funding and establishment of the *Daily Standard*. The facilitation of Adela and Cecilia's speaking tour and extended write-ups by the women of the WPA, the labour press, and Mabel Lane (who provided accommodation and sold the *Woman Voter*), was typical. Later Kathleen Hotson from South Australia, Jennie Scott Griffiths from New South Wales and Vida Goldstein from Victoria were also given highly visible performative roles (Jordan 2018, passim).

Second Women's Peace Army Tour.

In 1916, on Adela's second tour of Queensland, the WPA arranged for her to present four lectures in Brisbane. Adela was riding the tide of anti-British feeling encouraged by callous reactions to the Easter uprising in Ireland where hundreds had been killed and thousands arrested. By July, after the disastrous loss of life on the Somme in France, the Billy Hughes government wanted more troops, and conscription. Adela arrived in Brisbane on 5 August 1916 following an extremely successful eight weeks tour of New Zealand where she had spoken at 34 meetings, some with over three thousand people attending. The tour was organised by the Labor Representation Committee and assisted in the formation of branches of the Women's International League and several anti-conscription leagues.

First, on arrival in Queensland, Adela attended an important meeting with the Brisbane Industrial Council, a peak labour body. The WPA negotiated for Adela to be given a special hearing. The APA, Adela told the assembled union delegates, 'gave voice' to those who 'wanted to be heard on the future policy of the nation which would be laid down at the end of the war'; 'future peace would only be possible when the workers throughout the world asserted their inherent right to control their own destinies' ('Industrial Council' 1916). She outlined the relationships between trade unions and the APA in Victoria. She warned that if there was no justice in the treaty settlements, the 'diplomats and capitalist' Governments 'would inevitably bring about future wars'. The timing was good. The Council had been more concerned about preventing a split in the Labor state and federal governments than fighting conscription, let alone opposing the war. As 1916 progressed, however, historian Jeff Rickertt, has found the Council had moved to the left (2016, 146-47). Rank and file unions were abandoning the pro-war consensus. In response to Adela's talk, the Council resolved unanimously that 'all affiliated unions' to the Council 'affiliate' with the APA ('Industrial Council').

"Women are suffering during the war 'although they had no say in the making of the war, or how the country was to be governed", Adela told the assembled audience in Gympie at the start of her speaking tour ('Miss Pankhurst's Address' 1916). The details of this event are important given it is an explicit and rarely reported account of a direct attack on women negotiating for peace as 'suffragettes'. Gympie is a small regional centre north of Brisbane, once prosperous because of its goldfields. The Gympie local council refused permission for the WPA delegation to use the town hall

and the street lights had not been lit. Adela faced an avalanche of eggs, combined with paper bags of flour and bi-sulphide of carbon.

Adela's talk was titled 'Women and War'. She spoke of English constitutional history, the oppression of the landlords and the widening of the franchise. She had encountered returned servicemen previously across Victoria who had heckled and jostled her; she was 'unflinching' in facing attacks even 'rejoicing in the excitement' (Coleman 1996, 70). In Gympie, on the 9 August 1916, at this meeting of eggs and farm boys, she smiled 'rather wearily' as 'patriotic songs' were bellowed out ('Miss Pankhurst's Address'). The crowd was rowdy, did not want to hear about the history of women's rights and interjected that women had the same right to vote as men in Australia. A recruiting sergeant announced he had a volunteer. Adela kept her smile and consulted with Cecilia and her colleagues. A 'returned Anzac hero' mounted the platform and yelled out how "the women in England were 'pleased to work while their husbands went to war'". More songs including the national anthem followed, then the crowd began to 'count out' Adela. They drowned her out. They booed and jeered at the 'houseburner'. They booed and jeered at the 'suffragette'.

Was this a case of explicit anti-feminism? Adela was not a 'houseburner'. Historians, notably Joan W Scott, have long argued the powerful associations between 'national strength' and certain kinds of masculinity at the time of war, with explicit appeals to 'manhood' (1986, 1073). Adela's rhetorical overtures to commonality in the cause of women's equality misfired. The heightened significance of youthful male activity and the polarisation of gender roles during World War 1 led to a backlash against certain kinds of femininity re-opening the *fin de siècle* struggles between 'masculinists' and feminists for the control of national culture, as historian Marilyn Lake might have it (1986, *passim*). Yet the context was complex given the fragile sense of 'national identity' and citizenship in Australia after federation in 1901 given its colonial origins, and Australian citizens fighting at the behest of Empire in an overseas war in which they had no say. When war was declared, Australians, neither men nor women, had been consulted.

Women in Australia did vote, as women in Britain did not. The Gympie crowd was partly right—however, white women in Queensland never voted for the Upper House and only ever men could be nominated for it before it was dissolved. Only the year prior, in 1915, had legislation passed to allow women to stand for the Lower House. Women and men of all non-white

racism were explicitly excluded from both Houses. There was a long road ahead before electoral equality was to be achieved.

Adela thought that Australian women did not value their vote because it had been too 'easily won', but she was misinformed. To achieve their goals, Queensland suffragists had adopted very different strategies from other autonomous women's organisations, notably the WSPU. The vote had even been delayed in Queensland by suffragists because labour women had refused to compromise on justice, and rejected existing property qualifications. Instead they demanded 'one woman, one vote' (Jordan 2017, *passim*). The suffragists had campaigned successfully for several tens of thousands of disenfranchised itinerant shearers, stockman, and wharfies. The Women's Equal Franchise Association built on local allegiances with the labour movement. By 1916, women voters had more realistic expectations of their representatives in the lower houses. The long suffrage struggles of the nineteenth century had been partly appropriated by the conservative political forces when they had mobilised to define women's identities in context of maternal responsibilities. The war years saw further cultural shifts in militaristic definitions of gendered citizenship linking it with emotional regimes.

Violence against women increased as the war continued (Damousi, 1991, *passim*). The month before the bombardment of eggs at Gympie in 1916, Anzacs in London had jostled and manhandled suffragettes in a massive procession which included Sylvia Pankhurst. Accounts had been splashed across the colonial press. 'Amid screams from the women' and 'wild calls from the crowd', fragments of their banners were distributed as trophies ('A "Pease" Meeting'; 'Australian Soldiers in London'). Not only had the Gympie council refused the WPA access, the Ipswich mayor also forced the WPA to hold a challenging open-air meeting in the streets, and would not repay their deposit on the hall. In Rockhampton at the first meeting of three public events, the 'demonstration' of returned soldiers had to be 'put down' by the audience ('Miss Pankhurst's Tour').

While Australian women had some electoral rights their British counterparts did not, they were losing out in other areas. English women entered the work-force in large numbers and made significant gains obtaining relatively higher wages. This was not so in Australia, where the mobilisation of industry for war was much less. Rather, women were expected to, and did, volunteer for unpaid war work (Bruce and Frances, 1997: 37ff). The Melbourne-based WPA offering an alternative to unpaid labour established an employment agency, the Women's Labour Bureau, and a productive

women's farm in the attempt to relieve economic distress as conditions deteriorated (Smart 1986, 113-31).

Adela repeated her Gympie talk on 'Women and War' about the 'true meaning' of the women's movement', at a Brisbane public meeting chaired by Miller on 17 August. It went very differently from how it had in Gympie. 'For the sake of the children we must make friends with our enemies', counselled Adela and she continued with an extraordinarily prescient projection of the disastrous long-term economic effects of the war given Australia's huge war loans ('Women and War' 1916). The audience laughed when she told them Billy Hughes had lately been mixing with 'bankers and exploiters'; they cheered when she told them at the coming peace negotiations, control must be taken back from the 'munitions factories and politicians'. They took on board her argument that 'militarism really relied upon the amount of pressure that they could bring to bear on the women and the children' ('Women and War').

Given women's function as markers of social class distinctions, and the deep class divisions in Brisbane, must we assume most of the participants at Trades Hall were part of the powerful Queensland labour movement? Prostitution, the extent of infection among Australian soldiers, and the forthcoming changes to legislation were discussed at a special WPA Brisbane meeting. A social was hosted at Trades Hall ('Women's Peace Army Doings' 1916). The Trades Hall was also the venue for the final 'informative and entertaining' lecture 'War and the Workers', with which Adela had toured New Zealand, and it was packed out. For an hour and a half, she held her audience 'completely spellbound' ('War and Workers' 1916). 'I have seldom heard a speaker who held such sway over her audience' wrote an undercover military officer (Qtd Sparrow 2015). In her critique of the rise, fall and decline of empires, Adela argued 'militarism' first was used 'for building up' the working classes and then used in their enslavement ('War and Workers'). She critiqued the factory system and repeated her arguments that 'the "boys" were to-day fighting really to safeguard the interests of the capitalists', and that current systems of international governance invariably would lead to war. To loud applause, she urged them to do their best to start a peace movement in Australia that would 'ring through the world'.

Adela was represented as a charismatic lecturer in most labour press accounts, introduced as having 'the courage of her convictions and despite all opposition' delivering 'her message' ('War and Workers'). One time when Adela was inadvertently delayed, Thorp filled in for her at a public lecture.

Some of the audience compared them and decided Thorp's speech was 'much more sane and on a much more lofty level' (Summy, 77). Many might have preferred the spiritual grace of Thorp. To others Adela was the 'most convincing speaker' 'ever heard' (N. W. 1916, 19). Adela mostly appealed to her audience intellectually: 'simple, direct, effective'. She went for emotional impact with the clarity of her 'masterly exposition', outspoken denunciations, working herself up, reducing people to tears, and galvanising them to action.

Adela's sense of compassion and her anti-war beliefs embodied the views of people for whom she spoke for. Despite the rigid censorship, making sense of the ongoing war was both an individual and collective process as people interpreted symbols, talk, action and environment. Biographers come close to capturing Adela's extraordinary abilities to bring truth to power during World War 1, but, given the impoverished historical research on Australian peacemakers, they have underestimated her anti-war commitment, and just how much she was empowered during World War 1. Coleman writes of her 'vehemence in this cause' and tries to relate it to Adela's sympathy for the 'underdog' (63); and Kay Saunders found her life 'perplexing' in its 'irrational devotion to various causes' (106) motivated by a 'love of the spotlight, the roar of crowds' but confirms her empathy for the hardships of working-class women's lives. Both Coleman and Martin Pugh highlight the tensions, rivalries, and the painful exclusions within the Pankhurst family itself, to understand Adela's motivations. Adela's commitment to justice and non-violence, however, explains her actions at this time. Pacifism can be a portal to other ways of envisioning the future, and has implications across a whole range of values.

The WPA was instrumental in Adela's political successes. She was a spokesperson for a movement, thrown up by that movement. She had the moderating mentorship of not only Vida Goldstein, but the company of Cecilia John, and the receptive and critical audiences organised by the WPA, facilitated by experienced leaders. Adela's was a sincere hope to awaken people to the possibilities of negotiated settlement to end the war even while both Coleman and Saunders warn of her rhetoric, and her 'obsessions' about race and sex. While the celebrity status of the Pankhurst name and the arrogance engendered by her English ethnicity in a colonial setting have a place, most important in shaping her capacity to speak out was her long association with feminist and socialist politics in England through her family, her education and her paid work (Damousi, 1995, 20, 25-7). Seemingly unaware of Australia's fragile ecosystem, she could assert that 'man had conquered nature' and enough food could be produced for all.

This for her eliminated a cause of war. Adela's successes stemmed from her ability to argue a case that engaged with people's concerns, shared their assumptions, glossed over their failings, and resonated with their passions.

What was the legacy of Adela and Cecilia's second August 1916 visit? Their 'unestimatable' 'encouragement and stimulus' was timely given the WPA was at a cross-roads ('Women's Peace Army' 1916). A WPA branch in Rockhampton was established; over ten pounds raised; and the special fund for sending women leaders to the treaty negotiations in Europe (after an armistice) activated. A major achievement of the tour was the links cemented between the APA and the trade unions when the Industrial Council recommended affiliated unions join the APA. Widespread union affiliation with the APA was a step towards the federal Labor Party's final call, much later, for a negotiated settlement to end the war.

Adela and Cecilia wrote their own reports on the successes of the tour. They made no mention of the potentially dangerous rallies at Ipswich, Gympie or Rockhampton, rather everywhere they went they were greeted by 'a large body of friends' ('Miss Pankhurst's Tour'). How much had Adela's feminism, that is rather than her talk of pacifism or socialism, unleashed repressed violence between the genders and the deeper battle within the Australian settler communities? Damousi found that, earlier, labour and socialist women speakers had not been physically abused, that was until they appeared to be challenging masculinity when they spoke out against war and conscription (1991, *passim*). Soon after Adela's failed talk at Gympie, a voluntary labour army to protect speakers was appointed.

Adela and Cecilia were encouraged by their induction into a rich discursive space and material practices of labour successes in Queensland. Adela was deeply impressed with the 'industrial movement' ('Peace Advocates' 1916) and in January 1917 she resigned from the WPA to join the Victorian Socialist Party. Cecilia began to engage with Bolshevism and stepped down from her position as WPA secretary the following year.

In most of the combatant nations, the call to arms had polarised the women's movement dividing it disastrously between those who called for a negotiated settlement, and those who supported the military solution (Fell and Sharp 2007, 1). While Adela's visit meant the opposition between feminism and militarism was starkly drawn, fault lines between anti-war women opened up. On the one hand, various factions were being brought closer together with the threats of imprisonment (Rickertt 2016, 145, 151).

Increasingly radicalised and socialist, these women were working more closely with the Anti-Conscription Anti-Militarist League, the APA and the Industrial Council. On the other hand, the next WPA meeting decided to focus on challenging the increasing militarisation in the schools, and to establish branches of the Children's Peace Army.

Miller, after long experience, was astute at gauging the political tide and the vulnerabilities of disunity. Less than a month after Adela and Cecilia left Queensland, the WPA suspended its activities. Following the earlier extremely successful women's suffrage campaign strategies of dissolution and re-grouping, WPA members re-aligned to form a broader alliance dedicated to fighting against conscription. Women who supported the war effort could be included. A special meeting of the Anti-Conscription Coalition Committee [ACCC] was held on the 8 September 1916 to form the women's auxiliary. Miller stepped up into the ACCC leadership, Thorp took the position of secretary, and the committee was formed from representatives of the local Workers' Political Organisations. One of them was Helen Huxham the key labour organiser and wife of the Attorney-General, who opposed conscription but not the war directly. They went public with a mass meeting on the 20 September. They spearheaded the first national anti-conscription campaign and they spoke out on the streets, night after night, in locations across the city, alongside most of their elected Queensland politicians, including the premier. In this campaign, about a third of the speakers were women. And while scholar Verity Burgmann's view, that the radical 'flank' of the socialist movement were extremely important in marking out the perimeters of the debates about the war and allowing the space for more moderate anti-war voices might be pertinent to the final years of the war (2015, *passim*), women leaders of the first anti-conscription campaign in Queensland were part of the well organised labour mainstream.

During the centenary of the anti-conscription campaign, contemporary Victorian women re-discovered Adela and honoured her more outrageous activities in an extravaganza of dramatic re-enactment directed by Jeannie Marsh with singer Lisa-Marie Parker. In 'Serenading Adela', with a 60 voices choir singing extracts from *Put Up the Sword*, they expressed her spirit more freely than formal histories. There is a need in the communities for connected histories where women's work matters. The mapping of Adela's visits to Queensland, contextualised in terms of British intellectual circles and the international suffrage movement, suggests the research that could be pursued. Rather than questions of judgement about the significance and ideas of suffrage leaders, we need to establish Adela, and her cohort, as

leading public intellectuals at a time of deep trauma for society. Invariably there are limits to Adela's anti-war discourse, especially as a newly arrived immigrant. Adela's role as exponent of 'internationalism', too, stands in uneasy relationship to her growing fascination with working-class mobilisation and emerging nationalism. But when, at the height of her public importance, as spokesperson for dissenting voices across Australia, and affirmed by her extremely successful anti-war tours of Queensland, New South Wales, Western Australia, New Zealand as well as Victoria, she was taking her place on the world stage. And so too was the Australian peace movement, who gave her voice.

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