

# The peace movement

## DEMAND THE TERMS OF PEACE! AN APPEAL TO UNIONISTS.

(Issued by the Australian Peace Alliance, Victorian Council).

Comrades,  
On March 9th, the following resolution was submitted to the Trades Hall Council:—  
"That a motion be passed expressing this Council, and all approved bodies that wish to co-operate with the Acting Prime Minister, as leader of the Federal Labor Party, and to co-operate with the Prime Minister, to assist in securing the transmission of the following message: "This Council, representing 100,000 organized wage earners in Victoria, Australia, sends fraternal greetings to organized workers in every country, and implores them to immediately take simultaneous action to force their respective Governments to openly pronounce themselves upon the terms of peace and a time of negotiation."  
This resolution was lost on the casting vote of the Chairman in favor of the following amendment:—  
"That the resolution be referred to the unions affiliated with the Council, and that an expression of opinion be obtained."  
We appeal to you to give this resolution, when it comes before your Union, the most earnest consideration. We feel sure you will agree with the manifesto issued by the Independent Labor Party of Great Britain, as follows:—  
"The war in Europe, with its murder and waste and misery, outrages more and more the deeper conscience of the world. In many places the cost to our Empire is some millions sterling a day; the present and future cost in money, lives and suffering, is incalculable. With all its appalling sacrifice of life and treasure the war threatens to drag on almost interminably. However  
Each Country believes itself to be fighting for "Liberty," "Freedom" and other terms which, and in this connection are vague and unobtainable. In no case has a Government officially stated in a practical and concrete way the sense in which it would be willing to negotiate peace.  
In each of the countries at war, the soldiers' front-line decisions will not see content others of weakening and disorganizing enemy positions. Even if such a policy, instead of being at defiance the closest basis of history, were just and equitable, common sense of our order modern conditions have demonstrated that the possibility of obtaining this result is exceedingly remote. Still so long as the fear of dismemberment and crushing humiliation holds a nation in thrall, it will go on fighting to the last ounce of resources and the last drop of blood.  
Just as mutual distrust and fear and misunderstanding helped to cause the war, so they may now operate against all efforts towards an honorable and lasting peace, and the more earnestly the people will continue to demand, through such an appeal, that all nations should be willing to negotiate peace, the more likely will be an honorable and lasting peace, when it does come, will be founded upon any equitable principle. If the military and diplomatic leaders of the world's powers had a reasonable regard for their only duty, they would stop the war at once, perhaps in a ghastly factory which may be no worse than a breeding place in a bigger and bloodier struggle.  
The Diplomats make the War; the People must have a voice in the Peace.  
The conflict, costly and terrible as it is, will not necessarily result in a very much. It may determine which nation has the biggest army and the strongest fleet, but it does not follow that it will solve in any form of way the questions of nationality, institutions, trade, and other matters which are, or are supposed to be, involved in this struggle.  
Only foresight and reason can adjust these questions to the interests of ending peace and the moral and economic development of Europe. Hence the Labor and Socialist forces in all the belligerent countries should press their Governments to declare, not in vague generalities, but in clear and specific terms, what they are fighting for, and on this information it would be possible to take national and international action, with a view to reaching a settlement with the largest possible measure of equity and the least possible loss of life.  
There are obligations to be met, not least in regard to Belgium, but the aim and purpose of the Governments, the people at which they would be entitled to demand, in all the belligerent countries should press their Governments to declare, not in vague generalities, but in clear and specific terms, what they are fighting for, and on this information it would be possible to take national and international action, with a view to reaching a settlement with the largest possible measure of equity and the least possible loss of life.  
An open declaration might help to remove error and fear, and save hundreds and thousands of lives that otherwise would be needlessly slaughtered."  
The British Government has a responsibility in this matter together with the other Governments."  
Help the Australian Peace Alliance in creating a public opinion favorable to the policy outlined in this leaflet by circulating your leaflets to one in favor of the resolution when it comes before your Union, and by affiliation with

Many people around the world were opposed to the War.

Some of these people were connected to the peace movement, women's groups, trade unions and socialist groups.

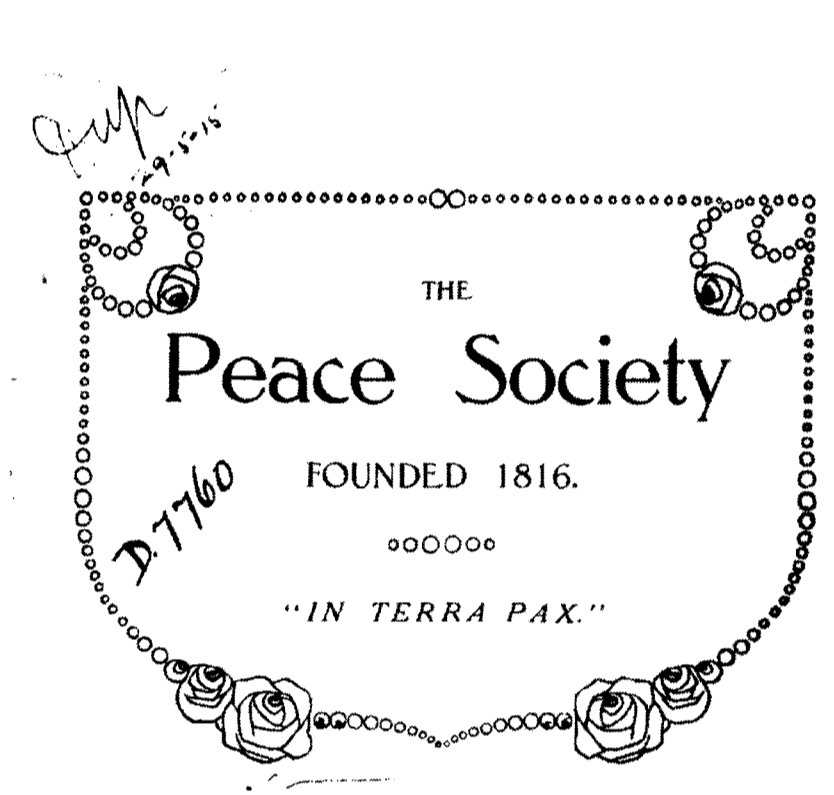
Some Australians did not believe they should fight in a British war. Others believed that it was not right to fight in any war – that it was wrong to kill, and that peaceful solutions should be found. Men who chose not to enlist for these reasons were known as 'conscientious objectors'. Some of these men served in non-combat roles such as stretcher bearers.

Many people considered that conscientious objectors were 'shirking their responsibilities'. Women often sent these men a white feather – a symbol of cowardice.

John Curtin, Brunswick resident and future Australian Labor prime minister, was a conscientious objector during World War I. He was charged with causing 'disaffection to His Majesty'.

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NINTH ANNUAL REPORT.  
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Image 1. Demand the Terms of Peace, an appeal to unionists poster 1916. Source: State Library of Victoria, Riley and Ephemera Collection.

Image 2. The Peace Society, Melbourne, 1914. Source: State Library of Victoria, Riley and Ephemera Collection

Image 3. Disarmament Sunday, 6 November 1921. Source: State Library of Victoria, MS9377/PH02