

# Moreland debates conscription



JOHN CURTIN  
Labor Prime Minister of Australia  
28 October 1941 to 30 July 1945  
Oval 363 July 1945

Conscription was fiercely debated in the Moreland area.

Anti-conscriptionists had a solid following in Moreland due mostly to its large working-class and Catholic population. St Ambrose's Hall was their headquarters in Brunswick.

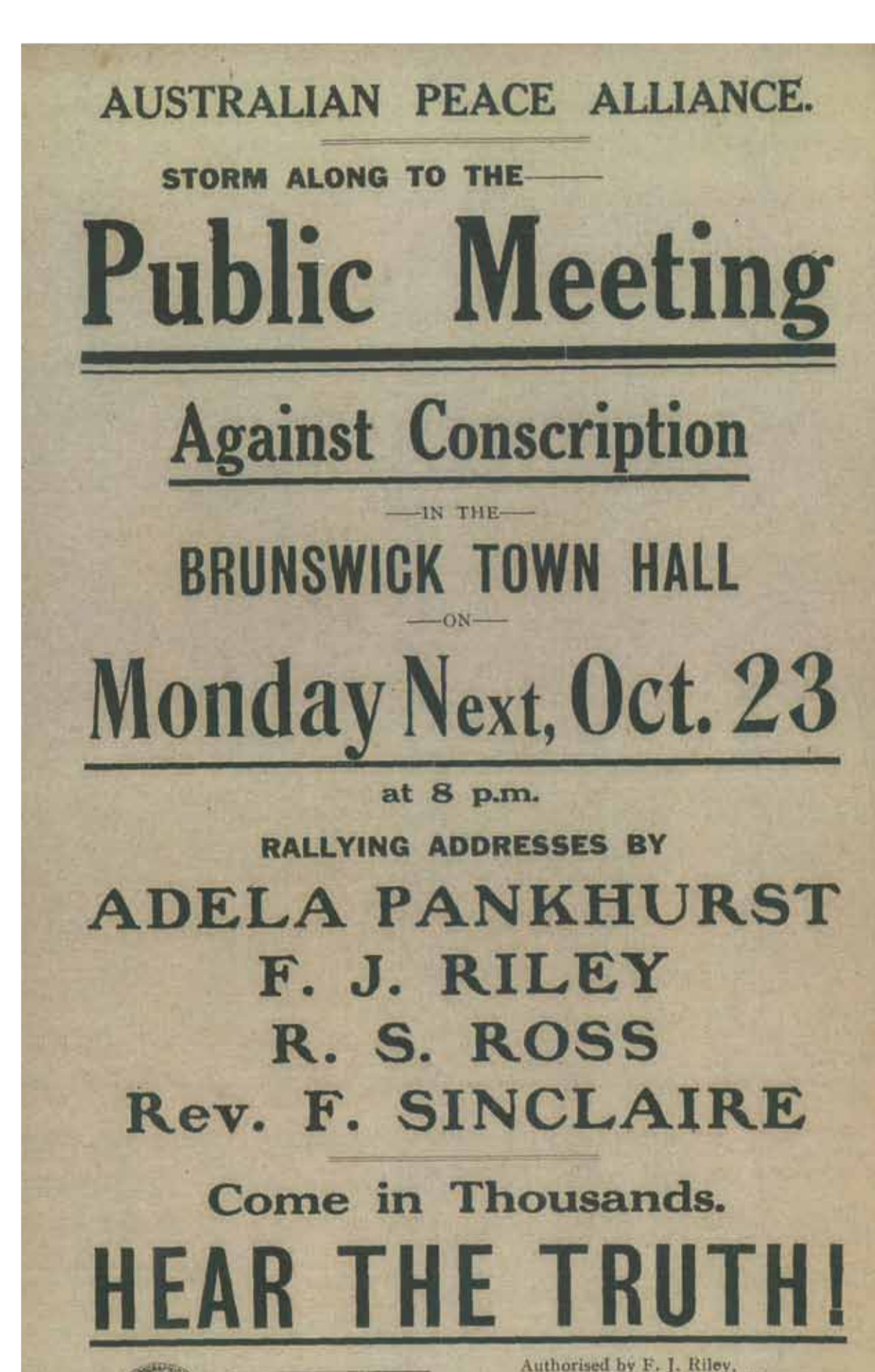
Dr Daniel Mannix, the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne had a close association with the Catholic people of Brunswick and Coburg. He claimed that the war was simply a 'trade war' without divine sanction or moral justification.

Councillor Phillips (Mayor of Brunswick) and Mr Hickford (President of Coburg's National Federation branch) were outraged by these comments.

The streets of Brunswick and Coburg became sites of conflict between the two sides. Meetings were held, and signs were hung on shop fronts and trailed behind cars. People also debated this topic on the streets. In 1918 a group of anti-conscriptionists rallied outside Pentridge Prison for the release of socialist Adela Pankhurst.

Even though the overall vote in Victoria for the 1916 Referendum was a narrow 'Yes' majority, around 58 per cent of Moreland residents voted 'No'.

In 1917, the local 'No' vote grew to approximately 60 per cent.



Cairns Post, 5 December 1917

## An Anti Meeting.

### Stormed by Returned Soldiers.

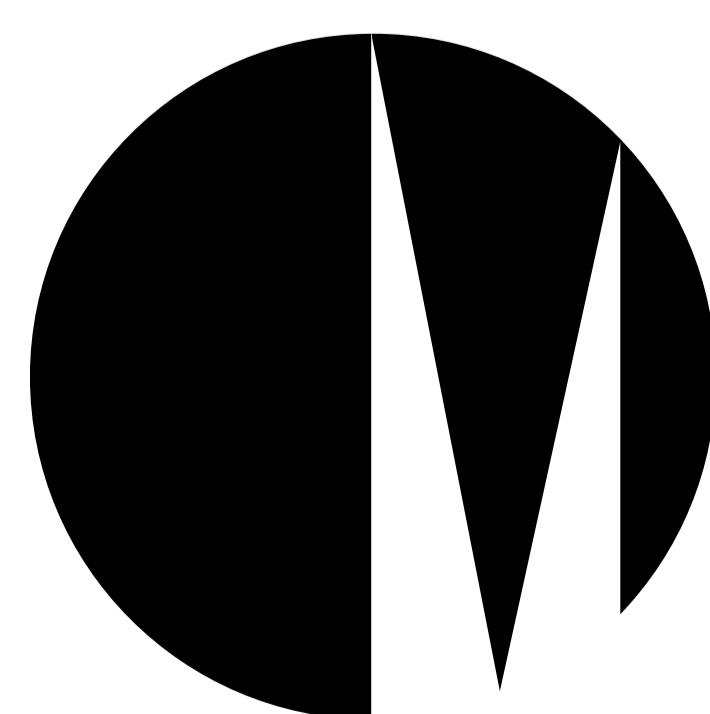
MELBOURNE, Dec. 4.

An anti-conscription meeting at Brunswick last night was stormed by returned soldiers who howled down the speakers. The President of the Victorian Political Labor Council (Mr. Bennet) said that if soldiers broke up "anti" meetings he would see that every conscription meeting in future was broken up.

## Moreland Remembers World War I



Australian Government  
Department of Veterans' Affairs



Moreland City Council



For full exhibition and more information, visit [www.moreland.vic.gov.au](http://www.moreland.vic.gov.au)

Image 1.  
John Curtin, 1925. [Labor Prime Minister 1941 - 1945]  
Source: State Library of Victoria, H29010

Image 2.  
Fraser and Jenkinson, 1916.  
Source: State Library of Victoria, Riley and Ephemera Collection.

Image 3.  
Cairns Post, 5 December 1917.  
Source: 'Our Anzacs', page 74.