Entry type: Organisation
Entry ID: AWE0542

Women's Peace Army

(1915 - 1919)

Born	15 July, 1915, Melbourne Victoria Australia
Died	18 December, 1919, Melbourne Victoria Australia
Occupation	Social action organisation

Summary

The Women's Peace Army was established on 15 July 1915 at the offices of the Women's Political Association, in an attempt to mobilise the women in Australia who opposed all war, regardless of political party membership. It was to be a fighting body to destroy militarism 'with the same spirit of self-sacrifice that soldiers showed on the battlefield'. 'We war against war' was the motto of the Women's Peace Army. Their flag took the feminist colours of purple, green and white. The most well-known members were Vida Goldstein, president, Cecilia John and Adela Pankhurst. With autonomous branches in Sydney and Brisbane, the Women's Peace Army projected a radical, militant image with its socialist anti-war ideology and attracted large numbers to its sometimes controversial public meetings. Other tactics included participation in peace demonstrations, support for peace candidates at elections, petitions to members of parliament and practical help to those disadvantaged by war. It participated in the anti-conscription campaigns of 1916 and 1917. With the end of the Great War, the Women's Peace Army went into recess on 18 December 1919.

Published resources

Book
The Goldstein Story, Henderson, Leslie M. (Leslie Moira), 1973

Put up the Sword, Pankhurst, Adela, 1915

Radical Melbourne : a secret history, Sparrow, Jeff and Sparrow, Jill, 2001

Journal
The Woman Voter, Goldstein, Vida, 1909-1919

Book Section
The Women's Peace Army, Gowland, Patricia, 1980

The unwritten history of Adela Pankhurst Walsh, Summers, Anne, 1980

Journal Article
Blood votes and the bestial Boche: a case study in propaganda, Shute, Carmel, 1976

Heroines and heroes: sexual mythology in Australia 1914-1918, Shute, Carmel, 1972

Thesis
Women in protest movements: the Women's Peace Army and the Save Our Sons Movement., Francis, Rosemary, 1984

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Worth Fighting For!, Fryer Library with research by Yorick Smaal, 2005,
https://webarchive.nla.gov.au/awa/20050708180233/http://www.library.uq.edu.au/fryer/worth_fighting/

Archival resources

National Library of Australia
[Biographical cuttings on Vida Goldstein, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals]

State Library of Victoria
Letters, diaries and lectures

Press cuttings book presented to Edith How Martyn, 1943. [manuscript].

The Goldstein chronicle, [between 1950 and 1973]. [manuscript].

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection
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Papers of Leslie M. Henderson, circa 1880-1961 [manuscript]

Papers on various Australian women [19--] [manuscript]

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