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THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST CONSCRIPTION IN AUSTRALIA – 1911 to 1914

The establishment of a General Meeting of Australian Friends in 1902 at last made possible united action on an issue which had been held by Friends to be of crucial relevance to their historic testimony against war.¹ The establishment of a Federal Parliament, also at the turn of the century, brought to the forefront of national politics the question of national defence which now came under the control of the Commonwealth Government and compulsory military training was being increasingly hailed as an essential component. In the 1901 Conference of Australian Friends, which preceded the first General Meeting of 1902, action was taken to bring Friends' views on compulsory military training before the Government while the proposed Defence Act was still being drafted and debated. A petition was drawn up expressing the Quaker conviction that war was inconsistent with the teachings of Jesus and therefore Quakers could not take part directly or indirectly in war-service. Friends had therefore already laid down the lines on which they might take political action. A 'watchdog', lobbying role was given to an appointed committee. Deputations and letters to individual members of both Houses of

Parliament were to be the recommended courses of action. This role continued throughout the first decade during which the Defence Acts were threatened but had not yet been translated into law.

JANUARY 1911

The critical phase of the struggle began with the coming into force on 1 January 1911 of the new Defence Acts, whereby all boys aged 12 – 14 were to be registered as junior cadets and those aged 14 – 18 as senior cadets with prescribed hours of training. There were to be no exemptions. Prosecution would follow failure to register or to report for drill. Australian Friends were not alone in their resistance. Parallel developments were taking place in New Zealand.

It was then that English Friends offered to give whatever help they could to strengthen Friends' efforts in the colonies. John Barrett in his study of the struggle against conscription in the years 1911–1914 acknowledged the crucial role played by Quakers in arousing public opinion on this issue. 'The Quakers', he said, 'managed to be nearly everywhere in the anti-conscription movement'.² 'Wherever peace and anti-conscription were mentioned in those years, up sprang a Quaker, fighting and trying to force his government's hand'.³ But Barrett draws the conclusion that the spearhead of the anti-conscription movement, the Australian Freedom League, emerged 'less as an Australian Movement than as a British Quaker organisation'.⁴

It will therefore be important to examine the extent of British Quaker involvement in these years and analyse the truth or otherwise of Barrett's assertion. The English Friends, Herbert and Mary Corder, reported to a meeting of the Australasian Committee on 5 January 1911 on their return from a visit to Australia and New Zealand. They spoke of the growing concern in the colonies of the way the Press was stirring up fears of Asian aggression to justify the introduction of compulsory military training. A small joint committee of London Yearly Meeting's Australasian Committee and its Peace Committee were formed to act in an advisory role to Friends in Australia and New Zealand in their opposition to the Defence Acts. This committee, called the Joint Committee of Australian Defence Acts, offered to provide pamphlets, raise funds to meet the expenses of campaigns and support a legal challenge to the Australian Defence Acts. It was made clear from the start that English Friends saw their role as supportive, not directive. W.H.F. Alexander, a member of this committee, explained this role.

In the press we feel it will be best for you Australians to write to Australians. For

us to write would probably be hurtful rather than helpful, as it would open the charge to 'outside influence'. But we shall be glad to help freely in financing the circulation of any matter which you think will appeal to those amongst whom you can see your way to circulate it.⁵

English Friends saw that Australian and New Zealand Friends were in the front-line in the fight against conscription. Alexander concluded his letter by expressing the feeling 'that you may be having the honour to win this fight for the whole British people, and if you fail, the struggle will pass on to other parts of the Empire'.

'AGITATORS, ESPECIALLY OF THE INTERNATIONAL QUAKER KIND'

This was the label J.E. Barrett⁶ fixed on the small band of Quakers who came out to Australia and New Zealand in 1911–1912 to fight against the spreading of the tentacles of militarism into the schools. They came, however, not to direct an anti-conscription conspiracy or to encourage law-breakers on the streets, but to give support to an already dedicated and determined core of Australian Quakers who, having failed to accept the validity of the Quaker refusal to compromise with militarism, were now facing the lonely and daunting task of taking the consequences of this refusal. It was this core of Australian and New Zealand Friends who were hailed in England as holding 'the post of honour' in the 'struggle for the soul of boys and young men'.

The first English Quaker to enter the 'struggle' was Dr J. Herbert Thorp. Early in 1911 he had expressed his concern to the Australasian Committee and at the end of that year an opportunity came for him to visit Australia to act as headmaster of The Friends School, Hobart, during the absence overseas of Edmund Gower. On his way to Hobart, he called in to visit Friends in Adelaide and was soon caught up in anti-conscription moves of Adelaide Friends. With Edward Fryer and Edwin Ashby he called a public meeting at the Friends Meeting House, North Adelaide, and made a special point of inviting the ministers of the Christian churches. This meeting on 23 January 1912 marked the beginning of the outreach of Quakers on the issue which had concerned them from the beginning of the century. The following Easter three Friends, John Hills and Thomas Hubbard, together with the English Friend, John Fletcher, planned a strategy to launch the anti-conscription campaign. Gawler, 40 kilometres north of Adelaide, was chosen as the target-town for the try-out. Barrett, consistent with his assumption that Fletcher, the Quaker "international agitator", had been sent out by

English Friends to master-mind the campaign, says that Fletcher 'took two Adelaide Quakers, Thomas Hubbard and John Hills, to the prosperous country centre of Gawler'.⁸

I can find no evidence that English Friends sent Fletcher out to Australia, still less that he was commissioned to 'master-mind the campaign'. He came out towards the end of 1911 as a free-lance Quaker, intending to investigate social conditions in the colonies. Instead he found himself in the midst of the controversy concerning boy conscripts, the only people opposing the government and the military authority being the Quakers and the Socialists. Fletcher unreservedly acknowledged the initiative taken by Australian Quakers, particularly J.F. Hills. 'To him more than any other man', Fletcher said, 'is the credit of the movement which grew with such remarkable rapidity and which achieved remarkable success.'⁹ Fletcher goes on to say that Hills suggested an anti-conscription caravan tour and asked him to accompany him, but the caravan was not available and so they went by train to Gawler. There they hired a farm cart and a very slow horse, stencilled posters and drove up and down the town advertising the meeting. Fletcher labelled the meeting a 'great success' and added, 'This is the beginning of the most extraordinary movement that I had until then been connected with'. Hills then, not Fletcher, appears to have been the initiator. He had shown his uncompromising mettle on the question of the conscription of twelve-year olds by writing a pamphlet, *Child Conscription*, which was published in 1912 with funds supplied by English Friends. When he was faced with having to register four junior cadets, boys in his school who were reaching the age of 12, he wrote a defiant letter to the Acting Area Officer on 27 June 1912¹⁰ refusing to follow this military direction. The letter concluded with the words, 'Whatever trouble it brings me I must follow my conscience... I am compelled by my conscience to take the grave responsibility of breaking the law, if need be, rather than assist in the slightest degree this military enrolment'.

Hills was a somewhat gaunt, gangly figure, who in his first years in Australia as a master at The Friends School, Hobart, had seemed to be a rather prickly individual. In 1900 during a staffing crisis at the school he resigned and went to Adelaide.¹¹ From that time until his death in 1948 he became a key figure in the South Australian Peace Movement, exercising something of the influence of the old Hebrew prophets, speaking out fearlessly in the market-place against the injustice of boy-conscription, enduring scorn in his resolve to 'speak truth', even if it meant a ducking in the River Torrens by his opponents. He had the commanding presence, the flowing white hair of a prophet. He was in

constant demand as a speaker and pamphlet-writer. As a result of Hills' unwavering energy and single-minded pursuit of his fight against injustice we have a well-documented record of the years when Quakers were on trial because of their faith. He blazed against militarism with something of the Voltaire he quoted – "*Ecrasez l'infame*". Militarism and capitalism had produced, he trumpeted, 'an infamy', a Frankenstein monster, (how prophetic this sounds of the nuclear madness). 'Militarism must go', he said, 'or humanity will go down'.

THE AUSTRALIAN FREEDOM LEAGUE

On the Thursday after the Easter Gawler meeting the Australian Freedom League was launched at a meeting held in the Friends Meeting House in North Adelaide. Though Friends were the mainspring of the new organization, the committee elected was representative of a wider circle than the Society of Friends. The Rev. M.C. Murphy, a Baptist minister, was elected chairman, George Everett, a councillor, chairman of the propaganda committee, the Quakers, John Barry and Edward Fryer, joint secretaries and another Quaker, Mrs H.S. Robson, treasurer. The League now gathered momentum. Meetings followed in quick succession at Mount Barker on 20 April 1912, in Melbourne on 27 April, where there was strong backing from the churches, particularly from the Rev. Leyton Richards of the Independent Church and the Rev. Charles Strong of the Australian Church. Fletcher went on from Melbourne to Hobart where a meeting was held on 1 May. Later, after Fletcher paid a brief visit to New Zealand, a branch was formed at a meeting in Sydney with a Quaker, Stanley Allen as secretary and in Brisbane, again with a Quaker, F. Lister Hopkins, as secretary. In all States therefore Quakers played an active part in the new movement. They also carried the message to the two political parties, Edwin Ashby to the Liberal Party and J. Herbert Thorp to Saddleworth branch of the Labour Party, which then went on to move a motion against conscription at the Labour Party conference in Adelaide, the motion being lost on a 3:2 vote for conscription. Members of the Australian Freedom League were active not only in organizing meetings but in writing a succession of pamphlets, the finance for publishing much of this "propaganda" coming from English Friends. More than a million pamphlets were distributed. John Hills' *Child conscription: our country's shame* had a wide circulation, selections being on sale from newsagents at the cost of one penny.

QUAKERS AND THE AUSTRALIAN FREEDOM LEAGUE

The Australian Freedom League was the offspring of Quaker religious conviction and socialist activism. The leadership clearly came first from the Quakers. Barret confirms this.¹³ Initial enthusiasm for the common cause, anti-conscription, blunted the basic differences, thus enabling a united front to be presented. Quakers at first were not troubled by being labelled as “peace workers-cum socialists”. English Friends through the newly formed Joint Committee of Australian Defence Acts readily responded to appeals for funds from the League. In the Minutes of a meeting of the English committee on 5 December 1912 letters of thanks were recorded from George White, secretary of the Industrial Workers of the World Club Sydney, and from J. MacDonald, secretary of the Australian Socialists. The English committee admitted that Australian Friends not being numerous could not achieve much without the cooperation of others, yet it also reminded W.H.F. Alexander and Alfred Brown, two English Friends sent out by London Yearly Meeting to help Australian Friends in their campaign, that the basis of Friends’ approach was religious, not political. It decided to issue a statement setting out the religious grounds for peace. This religious-political tension is one which must inevitably and continually confront Friends. In pursuit of what is held to be a worthy political objective how far can Friends work together with those who may be differently motivated? To what extent can Friends, obeying a religious imperative, act with others to achieve a desired political objective?

This dilemma surfaced in *The Australian Friend* before the General Meeting of 1912 when it was the major subject of discussion. In the issue of February 1912 the Friend, Edward Fryer had reported on a meeting which some Friends had had with the Socialists, the meeting which led ultimately to the foundation of the Australian Freedom League.

Dr Thorp has started a movement here, called “The Anti-Compulsory Military Training League”; we do hope this new society will be progressive and not adopt the passive methods of the Peace Society, Society of Friends, and other bodies who are supposed to be champions of peace.

This sparked a reaction in the following issue from the editor of *The Australian Friend*, J.F. Mather, under the heading, ‘Our tesimony against war. Whence? Wither?’ Mather clearly had Fryer’s statement in mind when he wrote, ‘judging from their utterances and demeanour some of our members are anti-militarist mainly on political grounds... The

advocacy of a righteous cause may be marred by a spirit that is not Christ-like'. With the arrival of English Friends who had come out to help the anti-conscription movement Mather was uneasy lest Australian Friends, who had been opposing war on a spiritual basis in direct obedience to what they had felt had been Christ's command, might be diverted from this task by those who opposed war for materialist, socialist or political reasons. The spirit of Christ, and none other, was acceptable as his guide. He saw Friends called to be the conscience of the Christian Church and he therefore urged that Friends' first responsibility was to remind the Church community of the need to be faithful to the spirit of Christ. The best way to help fellow Christians to a better understanding of Christ's life was for Friends to make Christ's spirit more apparent in their own lives.

It is not surprising therefore that the General Meeting of 1912 reflected the doubts and self-queryings which had followed the thrusting of Quakers into the political spotlight of the anti-militarist movement. There was a certain natural exaltation amongst young Friends at having found a cause to champion. J. Elliott Thorp wrote:

Our present work is bringing us into touch individually and collectively with all sorts and conditions of men... Quakerism has become recognized by pulpit, press and politician as a national force – as never before.

How far then would the General Meeting go in providing direction for this new-found sense of mission? Three extracts will reveal the trend of the discussion.

J.P. Fletcher:

Our religious liberty is at stake... We are not working for Australia alone... If we win in Australia, we shall help our brothers in New Zealand and in England... If we succeed, we shall have won again that priceless liberty which means so much to us today.

J.F. Mather:

Are we gathered as a political meeting for protesting against infringements of personal liberty, or are we a religious assembly waiting to receive guidance from the Divine Spirit?

Samuel Clemes:

And in a good cause let us not be afraid to associate ourselves with any of our brothers, whatever they may be labelled.

The General Meeting Minute, having reminded Friends of the political objective of working for the repeal of a “retrograde” law, concluded:

Meanwhile we desire to remind Friends that our testimony as to war and its relationships goes far deeper than opposition to any specific Act of Parliament and ask them to be careful lest, in their association with other persons or bodies for the purpose of this opposition, our ancient testimony be in any way compromised.

PROSECUTIONS

One of the first Quakers to be prosecuted under the Defence Acts was ‘the grand old man’ of Rockhampton Quakerism, Francis Hopkins,¹⁵ who was summoned to the Rockhampton Police Court on 20 December 1912 to answer the charge of having failed to register his grandson. Hopkins claimed exemption under Section 116 of the Commonwealth Constitution which stated that everyone should have ‘liberty to exercise his religion’. He was fined £1 with costs of £2.5.6., a lenient fine, in view of the liability to a minimum fine of £5 and a maximum of £100. Francis Hopkins died not long afterwards. His son attributed his death to the anxiety his father had suffered during the period of the trial.

Few people today realise to what lengths military authorities in 1912 were prepared to go to enforce acceptance of compulsory training of boys. One of the few cases where both father and son were imprisoned was that of the Quaker, William Ingle, who had emigrated in 1911 from Scarborough, England, with his son, Herbert. In April 1913 the father was brought to court on the charge of refusing to allow his son to drill. His defence and the magistrate’s naive view of the role of the churches is worth quoting:

Ingle:

My defence is that I am here as a Christian, as a follower of Christ: and to obey this Defence Act my conscience and my religion will be violated...

Magistrate:

To put it shortly, you object to this Act?

Ingle:

How can my child love and serve his fellow-men if –

Magistrate (interjecting):

We don’t want that. That is a matter for the churches.

Ingle:

I was told there was a conscience clause, but my child would be compelled to take an oath to serve the King. If a child agrees to join the military and in a battle an officer said to him, 'carry that box of ammunition to the men fighting', is he compelled to obey that officer?

Magistrate:

Don't you understand discipline? The officer must be obeyed.

Ingle:

Yes, well, there is no difference between carrying the ammunition and shooting a man.¹⁵

Apparently there was loud applause at this in the court, applause which was promptly suppressed by the magistrate. Ingle was ordered to pay £1.10.0, in default fourteen days in prison. He chose prison. The authorities sensing that the imprisonment of parents was getting unwanted publicity,¹⁷ decided to change tack and ordered area officers not parents, to register all eligible boys in their areas. The son, Herbert, was thereupon caught in the dragnet, refused drill and was sentenced to detention at Fort Largs where continual refusal to cooperate brought him solitary confinement, a diet of dry bread and unsweetened tea and an alleged beating with a cane by an officer. William Ingle had had enough of his adopted country. After his son's release he returned to England.

The case which brought to an end the use of solitary confinement to break the boys' spirit was that of Tom Roberts, whose family were members of Melbourne Friends' Meeting. His case received considerable publicity so that June 1914, according to Barrett,¹⁸ 'became something of a Tom Roberts month in press and parliament'. Tom Roberts was confined to a solitary confinement cell at Fort Queenscliff for 21 days for refusing to train under the Defence Act and after visiting him his father, Fred Roberts, released to the press details of the 'inhuman' conditions of solitary confinement 'only used in the case of refractory criminals of the worst type'. Letters from a variety of sources were directed to the government and these resulted in instructions being issued to the military authorities that solitary confinement was not to be used for trainees refusing drill.

COOPERATION BETWEEN ENGLISH AND AUSTRALIAN FRIENDS

London Yearly Meeting, conscious of the importance of the anti-

conscription issue in Australia to Friends in England, gave not only moral and financial support, but also sent a delegation of Friends, J. Herbert Thorp, Alfred Brown and W.H.F. Alexander, to participate personally in the campaign.²⁰ Indeed, these three Friends were on occasion available to give full-time help in organizing public campaigns against conscription. That the Australian Freedom League depended on Friends for its leadership is unquestioned. Thus when there was need to find a replacement for the Secretary, the Friend John Barry, who was returning to England, Alfred Brown wrote to the secretaries of the State branches of the League, suggesting that since most of the League's key members would be in Adelaide in September 1913 for General Meeting,²¹ a meeting of the League could be called to appoint a new secretary. Alfred Brown himself was in the chair and the Friend, Arthur Watts, was appointed Barry's successor.

Cooperation between English and Australian Friends in the common cause was probably at its peak in the first half of 1914, before the declaration of war inevitably put a brake on English Friends' participation on the Australian front. Yet English Friends, while willing to do all they could to help, were sensitive of the danger of appearing to direct rather than to support Australian Friends. On the other hand Australian Meetings were still directly linked as Monthly Meetings with parent London Yearly Meeting and therefore expected London Yearly Meeting to feel some sense of responsibility for nurturing the fledgling Meetings in the colonies. By August 1914 it seemed that the activity of the Australian Freedom League was slowing down. The Joint Committee of Australian Defence Acts in London received a letter from the secretary of the League indicating that operations had been suspended for the time being. The Government was now involved in a war, boys in prison had been released and no further prosecutions were likely to be pressed. It was clear that the considerable financial support which had flowed from English Friends in the preceding three years would now dry up because of the war. Charles Howie wrote on behalf of Australian Friends who had been involved with the League: 'You cannot conceive how grateful we are to you. Without your help from England we should be almost powerless'.²²

Alfred Brown, who had been very active in the League, had returned to England by way of Japan, where he had been engaged in positive peace-making, meeting with representatives of the government and schools to promote understanding between Australia and Japan, for Japan had been regarded as a threat by many in Australia and this had led therefore to general acceptance of compulsory military training as a

response to this threat. It was Alfred Brown who had kept the Defence Acts Committee informed of events in Australia and who had recommended what funds should be sent out. J. Percy Fletcher was not so close to Australian Friends as Alfred Brown had been. His time had been divided between Australia and New Zealand. After the initial launching of the Australian Freedom League in four Australian States it was in New Zealand that Fletcher's main contribution lay. It was there too that he had a foretaste of what later was to be a much longer period of imprisonment in England. Friends in England decided that their peace workers should be recalled and Fletcher was advised in July 1914 that there could be no extension of his year in Christchurch. He worked his way back as a cook on board a ship in mid-1915. W.H.F. Alexander and his wife Harriet had returned by April 1914. It seemed almost like the recall of the distant members of a fishing fleet at the warning of the approaching cyclone.

1911-1914 ANTI-CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN – EFFECTIVE OR FUTILE?

Barrett claims²⁴ that in *Conscription under Camouflage*, published in 1919, Fletcher and Hills distorted the extent of public opposition to the conscription of boys in the period 1911-1914. Barrett's thesis is that 'most Australians readily accepted the introduction and continuation of compulsory military service, if circumstances seemed to warrant it'²⁵ and he plays down the extent of resistance to the campaign of the military authorities. Fletcher and Hills, on the other hand, claimed that the figures of enrolments and prosecutions revealed 'great and ever-growing opposition of the boys and youths of Australia and New Zealand to compulsory military training',²⁶ basing this judgement on figures supplied to the Australian Freedom League by the Secretary to the Defence Department.²⁷ They labelled the scheme 'a ghastly failure'.²⁸

SUMMARY OF PROSECUTIONS UNDER THE DEFENCE ACT

	No. of prosecutions for 2 years to 30.6.1913	Yearly average	No. for year ending 30.6.1914	Total 3 years to 30.6.1914	No. for year ending 30.6.1915	Totals to 30.6.1915
Queensland	1,249	624	1,422	2,671	364	3,035
N.S.W.	4,871	2,436	6,211	11,082	2,982	14,064
Vic.	4,573	2,286	3,513	8,086	2,040	10,126
S. Aus.	1,327	664	1,372	2,699	247	2,946
W. Aus.	860	430	889	1,749	211	1,960
Tas.	775	388	687	1,462	349	1,811
Totals	13,685	6,828	14,094	27,749	6,193	33,942

These figures provide an opportunity for analysis, though it must be admitted that it is easy and tempting to make figures justify the reasons for which one sought them.

The first striking fact is the number of prosecutions, 27,749, in the period from January 1911, when the Act came into force, to the outbreak of war in August 1914. No analysis is possible of the reasons for this number of defaulters that warranted prosecution. A very small percentage would have been attributable to religious conscientious objection, or to conscientious objection on other grounds. Many would have failed to turn up to drill for reasons of inertia, apathy, or an Australian reluctance to be "pushed around" by "them", the authorities. Barrett attempts to relate the number of prosecutions to the number liable for training and takes his figures for mid-1914 when there were 123,487 liable for training and 14,094 prosecutions, giving a percentage of 11.4 per cent prosecutions. Even on Barrett's calculations the percentage would seem to be a significant one, bearing in mind that prosecution would represent a forbidding ordeal to a lad of teenage. Jauncey estimates the proportion somewhat differently by stating that there were four-and-a-half boys at drill for one prosecution.²⁹

Barrett also belittles the quality as well as the quantity of the opposition labelling the boys prosecuted as "reluctant compliers", who needed compulsion before agreeing to conform. But whatever the hidden reason for non-compliance the proportion of those resisting would seem to be significant.

Another possible deduction from the figure is that, granted the machinery of compulsion may have taken some time to operate smoothly, the number of prosecutions for the year ending 30 June 1914 is greater than the sum of the previous two years, given in the first column. This would suggest that compulsion was not reducing the number of non-compliers – the justification suggested by Barrett – but that indeed non-compliance increased significantly. The number of detentions in military barracks and ‘fortresses’ is alleged to have exceeded 5,000 by 30 June 1914. This indicates that there was a significant number of boys who were willing to risk imprisonment rather than conformity, for whatever reasons. The Australian Freedom League did much to arouse a public conscience *re* the criminalizing penalties imposed on young boys for non-compliance with the military authorities.

The Australian Freedom League by mid-1914 was beset by internal problems stemming from the split in Labour supporters over loyalty to the party or to the League. English Quaker support, both in finance and personnel had been withdrawn at the outbreak of war. Australian Quakers had not yet resolved the politico-religious tension within their own Meetings. The Australian Freedom League therefore seemed to have reached the limit of its effectiveness. Had it then been an exercise in futility?

In my view this was far from the truth. The Australian Freedom League had undertaken the daunting task of awakening Australian public opinion on an issue on which tradition and current fears of invasion by “coloured Asian hordes” had hitherto permitted no contrary opinion. Defence of one’s country, right or wrong, was an unquestioned sacred duty. Apart from a small group of Quakers, which Barrett reminds us represented only .015 per cent of the population, there was no peace movement, no will to resistance of the military establishment. The Labour Party was also more fearful of exposure to an Asian threat of invasion than supportive of an international socialist brotherhood. There was however a lurking unease that a conscript army might be used, as had happened in France in 1910,³⁰ against the working-class. The Australian Freedom League may have aggravated this unease, but it at least aroused the sleeping giant, the Labour Party, or, to change the metaphor, the League provided the seed-bed for the growth of the successful anti-conscription referenda of 1916 and 1917, though the issue then became, not the boy-conscription of 1911–1914, but conscription for overseas service in time of war. The issue had changed, but the seeds of questioning and resistance had been sown. Fletcher and

Hills believed that the answer to the future of the anti-conscription issue lay with the Trade Unions. The three years of their association with the Australian Freedom League had given them cause for hope that 'soon there will be a sullen roar of water bursting through dykes, and those misleaders who have prated about citizen soldiers, a nation in arms and the blessings of Empire and who have sold themselves to the London financiers and the National Service League in England will be swept away into obscurity like helpless driftwood'.³¹

It could be said that while the Quakers provided initial leadership for the Australian Freedom League, the League provided Quakers with the opportunity to move out from what had been a limited circle of action into the public arena. This brought with it a marked increase in the number applying for membership of the Society of Friends. At General Meeting in 1913 the increase in membership was 41, 22 of whom probably came in by conviction through association with Friends in the peace movement. Alfred Brown on return to England said that opposition to the Defence Acts was 'the nearest thing to a common cause'.³² In a sense Quakers found not only a cause but for the first time in their Australian history, from being a rather private Society of Friends, they found a public '*raison d'être*'.

William N. Oats

NOTES AND REFERENCES

¹ *Christian Faith and Practice in the experience of the Society of Friends*, Headley Bros., London, 1961, No. 614.

² J. Barrett, *Falling in*. Hall and Ironmonger, Sydney, 1979, 108.

³ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁵ W.H.F. Alexander to William Cooper, 8 January 1911.

⁶ Barrett, *op. cit.*, 115.

⁷ Minutes of Defence Acts Committee, 3 July 1913, Friends House Archives, London (FHAL).

- ⁸ Barrett, *op. cit.*, 112.
- ⁹ J.P. Fletcher Uncatalogued Papers, FHAL.
- ¹⁰ J.P. Fletcher and J.F. Hills, *Conscription under camouflage*. Adelaide, 1919, 38.
- ¹¹ W.N. Oats, *The Rose and the Waratah*. Blubberhead Press, Hobart, 1979, 152–53.
- ¹² Fletcher and Hills, *op. cit.*, 8.
- ¹³ Barrett, *op. cit.*, 108–109.
- ¹⁴ *The Australian Friend*, 21 December 1912, 612.
- ¹⁵ W.N. Oats, *A Question of Survival*. Brisbane, University of Queensland Press, 1985, 325–27.
- ¹⁶ Fletcher and Hills, *op. cit.*, 58–9.
- ¹⁷ There was a public meeting in Adelaide, chaired by Professor Darnley Naylor, which demonstrated in favour of freedom of conscience.
- ¹⁸ Barrett, *op. cit.*, 190.
- ¹⁹ *The Australian Friend*, 29 April 1914, 765.
- ²⁰ All three Friends were also involved in positions of temporary responsibility at The Friends School, Hobart.
- ²¹ Barrett lists these, *op. cit.*, 108–109.
- ²² Minutes of the Defence Acts Committee, 1914, 121, FHAL.
- ²³ Alfred Brown said that he went to Japan to investigate at first hand 'race relations in the Pacific Area which affect the alleged justification for the Colonial Defence Acts'. Proceedings of London Yearly Meeting, 1914, 121.
- ²⁴ Barrett, *op. cit.*, 2.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 286.
- ²⁶ Fletcher and Hills, *op. cit.*, 120.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 245.
- ²⁹ L.C. Jauncey, *The story of Conscription in Australia*. Macmillan, Melbourne, 1968, 53.
- ³⁰ M. Briand, formerly a Socialist Deputy, used troops to break a railway workers' strike and the strikers were prosecuted under military law.
- ³¹ Fletcher and Hills, *op. cit.*, 122.
- ³² MS. Box 17(1), FHAL.

The above is a slightly amended text of the presidential lecture given to the Friends' Historical Society on 28 June 1986 (Ed.).