This 1916 leaflet, printed by Fraser & Jenkinson, was distributed to homes across Australia. Written by W.R. Winspeare, and drawn by the famous Worker cartoonist Claude Marquet. Watching over the ballot box is a devil like likeness of pro-conscription prime minister William Morris Hughes. It was authorised by John Curtin who, 25 years later, was prime minister from 1941 to 1945 during World War 2.

This booklet commemorates the centenary of the victorious Anti-conscription movement in Australia. Written and design by Mark Gregory.
The Blood Vote was distributed as a flyer around Australia much to the ire of a number of its recipients who wrote letters to the ‘mainstream’ newspapers. The poem was countered three weeks later on the front page of the pro-conscription Anglican Church weekly newspaper the Watchman with a poem titled ‘The Dishonor Vote’ by Janet E. Stinson. This poem contains these verses obviously based on the poem above:–

“They put the weapon into my hand,
It seemed but a harmless pen
I did not know what a dreadful thing
I was carelessly doing then.

“They gave me the ballot paper
Our heroes’ help or doom
But alas! I forsook our heroes gone,
In that frightful little room.

The war of the verses seen above is not uncommon, and the IWW was famous for its parodies of hymns with Joe Hill’s ‘Preacher and the Slave’ being a good example of poaching and repurposing of the adversary’s culture.

A more widely published pro-conscription song was publicly endorsed by prime minister Hughes who is reported in the Tasmanian newspaper the Examiner as saying “I commend the song to the people of Australia: let them tell in the music the patriotism which is in their hearts.”

With its words composed by W.M.Fleming M.P. and set the music composed by F.D. Millar ‘Conscription Song Yes! Yes! Yes!’ has the chorus:–

Australia stands impatient.
She waits to curse or bless,
And this shall be our answer,
Yes! Yes! Yes!
And this shall be our answer,
Yes! Yes! Yes!

The political stance of the poetry of the Federal member of parliament Fleming had received the approval of the NSW weekly newspaper the Land in 1915.

We are in receipt of a small booklet of war verses from the pen of Mr. W. M. Fleming, M.P. The publication is being sold at threepence per copy, and the proceeds donated to patriotic purposes. The following is a stanza from “The Test,” and is typical of the good stuff in the little book.

We have heard the call of the Empire, we have seen the lure of the flag,
But here we have something greater than even the grand old rag.
For men may fall in their millions, women and children wail,
But the march of the people’s freedom must never be known to fail.

The flag of the people’s freedom floats over the fields of death,
And surely a freeborn people will fight to the last hot breath.
Surely the blood of the fighter runs in Australia’s veins,
From the waves of her sparkling seaboard to the dust of her sun-scorched plains.

An important aspect of this song is that the original comes from the pen of the famous “Corn-Law Rhymper” the militant poet Ebenezer Elliot. It was one of the poems published in Sheffield in his 1833 book ‘Corn Law Rhymes’.

The eighty year trajectory of this verse from militant origins to hymnbook and its later reappearance as part of the militant anti-conscription repertory is not an unusual one.

Here is the tune as presented in Josiah Booth’s 1903 anthology ‘100 Hymn Tunes,’ Here Ebenezer Elliot is unacknowledged.
"Women's Anti-Conscription Songs" with five songs the most cited of which was 'I Didn’t Raise My Son To Be a Soldier.' This song has the chorus:

I didn't raise my son to be a soldier;  
I brought him up to be my pride and joy;  
Who dares to put a musket to his shoulder  
To kill some other mother's darling boy?

The song came from the United States where it was a hit song in 1915 under the original title “I Didn’t Raise My Boy To Be A Soldier.” It was so popular that a 78 rpm recording was made which today can be downloaded as an mp3 file, giving us access to how it was performed a century ago in those pre-radio times. The song’s popularity had been widely reported in Australian newspapers.
Anti-Conscription Army Songs.

Solidarity for Ever
By Ralph H. Chaplin
(Tune: "John Brown's Body")

When the Union's inspiration through the workers' blood shall run,
There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun.
Yet what force on earth is weaker than the fickle strength of one?
But the Union makes us strong.

Chorus:
Solidarity for ever!
Solidarity for ever!
Solidarity for ever!
For the Union makes us strong.

Is there aught we hold in common with the greedy parasite,
Who would lead us into bondage and would crush us with his might?
Is there anything left for us but to negotiate and fight?
For the Union makes us strong.

It is we who ploughed the prairies, built the cities where we trade,
Dug the mines and built the workshops; millions of railway laid.
Now we stand, outlawed and starving, 'mid the wonders we have made;
But the Union makes us strong.

All the world that's owned by idle drones is ours, and ours alone.
We have laid the wide foundations; built it skyscrape by stone.
It is ours, and not to slavé in, but to master and to own.
While the Union makes us strong.

They have taken untold millions that they never tilled to saw,
But without our brain and muscle not a single wheel can turn.
We can break their haughty power; gain our freedom when we learn.
That the Union makes us strong.

In our bands is placed a power greater than their hoarded gold.
Greater than the might of armies magnified a thousandfold.
We can bring to birth the new world from the ashes of the old;
For the Union makes us strong.

"Never Goes"
(Tune: "Take it to the Lord in Prayer")

Are you tired of fat's aggression?
Of the war do you feel sick?
Would you take a frank suggestion
From the boys who're going to kick
All your rulers are designing
To compel you to fight your foes.
If against them you're inclining
Come and join the "Never Goes."

If your backbone's made of jelly,
Is your courage in a can?
Has your heart dropped in your belly?
Would you prove you are a man?
When they've passed the consent bill
To augment your many woes,
Send them back the sly reminder
You have joined the "Never Goes."

If you're not a belly wrangler,
But a man who has a heart,
If you're not a crumbling reaper,
Come with us and play your part.
All of us are cunning actors,
We are giving lines for laughs;
Come and swell the growing lapel;
For Solidarity for ever.

"Never-doers" they've seen us
For a soldier and would force us with their might.
We will send them out on further,
That for them we'll never fight.
We are going to stand together.
"For all our war," our motto goes;
Solidarity for ever.

"Never-goers."

Bump Me into Parliament
(Tune: "Yankee Doodle."

Come listen all dear friends if of mine,
I want to move a motion.
To make an Edict here
I've got a "bless'd" notion.

Chorus:
Bump me into Parliament;
Bump me my way up;
Bump me into Parliament
On every Election Day.

Some very wealthy pals I know
Encourage me most clever;
When many speak for an hour or so.
Why can I talk for ever.

I have the poor man's cause at heart,
I stand for revolutions.
The quickest way to bring them
Is talking "constitutions."

I know the Arbitration Act
Like a sailor does his rigging.
So if you want a small advance
I'll talk to Justice Higgins.

The question's asked—"What would I do
If a'st the Germans came here?"
A regulation I would make
To say they ain't to remain here.

Bump Me into Parliament
(Continued)

To keep the cost of living down.
A law I straight would utter;
A hundred lauries for a day I'd sell;
With a penny a ton for butter.

The tax that kids is getting scarce.
I think there's something in it.
By extra laws I'll incite
A million kids a minute.

I've read my bible ten times through.
And Jesus justifies me.
The man who does not vote for me,
By Christ! he crucifies me.

The Button that He Wore
(Tune: "The Wearing of the Green.")

I met a working man to-day who wore
A photo of a photograp, and a Union Jack as well.
I looked into his toil-worn face, and a simple look it bore.
I could tell he was a booted by the button that he wore.

He asked me how I got along; I told him pretty tight.
That for a country where men starved I would refuse to fight.
He said he stood for Empire, though he couldn't find a job;
He praised the British Navy—and he bumpted me with a button.

I asked him many questions then
Why he was knocked about.
His money it was usual, for he hadn't thought it out.
"Thank God this country's free," he cried, "and the people own the land."

But why the copper moved on
He could not understand.
I told him how the rich grew rich by plundering the poor.
And that for us to organise the sure and only cure.
The message I kept driven home his frozen brain did thaw.
Now and with every one round here he's shouting "Stop the War!"

He took the buttons from his coat
And flung them to the wind.
He made a resolution that he never will rescind.
He's pledged to solidarity, and a wiser look he bears.
You can still be your crusade by the button that he waxes.

FROM THE FRONT.
SOLDIER'S NO-CONSCRIPTION SONG

From the Newspaper the Truth, 25 November 1916 p. 6.

The following lines are sent to us for publication by Private A. J. Hewitt, Anzac Mounted Division, Egypt, and are interesting as showing the feeling of many of our soldiers at the front on the Conscription issue:

We don't want Conscription out here, Mr. Hughes.
This war, O Hughesie, we are not going to lose.
This talk about Conscription gets right on our nerves.
While the volunteer fights for the country he serves.

If a conscript were here, he would get a crook spin:
If he just said boo-hoo, he'd be bashed on the chin.
For we're all willing fighters, and don't want chaps here
Who would rather be in Australia drinking their beer.

Oh, no, Mr. Hughes, you're on the wrong track:
The chaps around the pubs, you should give them a pack.
And send them to work in the wheatfields of grain.
To ease the poor cockies from troubles and pain.

For we've men enough here to carry things
So don't pander to Fat, showing the worker your scorn.
You want, workers to go, Fat's darlings to save;
When you talk of Conscription it makes a man rave.

Australia's best manhood is now over here.
On Anzac they suffered, and fought without beer.
Your blinky Conscription is rather too late.
You've just now woke up, when we're at the Huns' gate.

Why don't you get busy, and collare some spies?
It's through a fat German that Kitchener lies
In the deep briny ocean. I think it's a shame
To let Germans roam; but who is to blame?

Then six o'clock closing of pubs is a joke.
Why not let the beer-soakers have a good soak,
Then send them to the country, some scrub land to clear,
For the brave volunteers who are now over here?

I think, Mr. Hughes, this is all I will say,
Don't waste money on Conscription, but just raise our pay.
For a man that is married, a shilling a day
Is not much to draw, so, Hughesie, hooray!

"The Anti-Conscription Army Songs" on the previous page features four songs, the most famous of which were the IWW song "Solidarity Forever" composed by Ralph Chaplin in the United States in 1915, and the Australian song "Bump Me Into Parliament." Both songs still remain popular and are performed today. This early published version of "Bump Me Into Parliament" has three extra verses showing that it was repurposed for the anti-conscription campaign. The original verses were composed by Bill Casey, an IWW activist who later became the secretary of the Queensland Branch of the Seamen’s Union of Australia. "The Button That he Wore" is a remake of an IWW song of the same name:

I met him in Dakota when the harvesting was o’er,
A "Wob" he was, I saw by the button that he wore.

"Never Goes" sung to the hymn tune "Take It To The Lord In Prayer" exhibits all the characteristics of an IWW song urging the audience to fight "fat’s aggression" to join instead the refusal to sign up for war.

The only extant copy of this 1917 song sheet seems to have been collected by W. G. Spence, a strong Billy Hughes supporter, who obtained it from the 1918 Telephone Guide published by the Government Printing Office in Melbourne, where it caused a minor scandal and a hunt for whoever had slipped it into the guide to be stitched into the pages of telephone numbers.

Read more about this on p. 6.
Although the IWW “Hymn Sheet” was published in many regional newspapers in New South Wales only one of them revealed that the source of the facsimile was the NSW Government. Above we have evidence from the *Forbes Advocate* of Tuesday 21 August 1917 which made the source clear:

“We have been asked by the N.S.W. Government to publish extracts from a pamphlet distributed by members of the I.W.W. at a meeting in Sydney Domain.”

Perhaps the IWW was pleased with the way their song sheet was being distributed to thousands of people they would not normally reach but more important lesson is the way that wartime and coercive wartime laws intensify the complicity of the press to serve the political requirements of the propaganda state.

The IWW slogan in the song sheet “All Workers: ‘The Army of Production,’ in One Big Union, regardless of age, creed, color, or sex, is invincible.” remains to this day an important stance in the annals of the Australian labour movement. The second song in the song sheet “Solidarity Forever” remains the most popular song of the movement, a tribute to the IWW role in the anti-conscription movement.

It is clear that this article from the *Age*, 13 April 1918 refers to the Anti-Conscription Army Songs broadside as seen above. The title of the song sheet is mentioned as well the name of one of its songs “Bump Me Into Parliament.” The topics referred to tally well with the song sheet so “greedy master class” is close to “greedy parasite” in “Solidarity Forever,” and “incubate the kids” refers to the second last verse of “Bump Me Into Parliament.” The only missing topic seems to be “maiden’s sacrifice.”

That the version of “Bump Me Into Parliament” has three extra verses in the song sheet compared to other published versions suggests that it was repurposed for the song sheet which was published in 1917 and distributed for the second WWI conscription referendum.

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A 1917 IWW song sheet ‘Songs Of Freedom’ handed out to the large crowd of protestors against the “Illegal Association Act Amendment” at Sydney’s Domain and was sent out to regional NSW newspapers by the NSW State Government for them to publish, probably the only reason we can now recover a copy! This single page – seemingly a page of a songbook that was for sale – has four IWW songs the best known of which are ‘Solidarity Forever’ and ‘Casey Jones the Union Scab’.

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**HYMNS OF HATE**

**I.W.W. SUNG DAILY BY MARCHING STRIKERS**

**SABOTAGE ADVOCATED IN CRUDE DOGGEREL**

The Sydney wartime trial and imprisonment of IWW leaders and activists are well known but the treatment was much the same in other states. In Perth a newspaper report includes the prosecution reading out the whole of ‘Casey Jones the Union Scab’, perhaps contributing to the song’s continued popularity throughout the 1930s depression.

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The IWW slogan in the song sheet “All Workers: “ ‘The Army of Production.’ in One Big Union, regardless of age, creed, color, or sex, is invincible.” remains to this day an important social and political stance in the annals of the Australian labour movement. The second song in the song sheet “Solidarity Forever” composed by Ralph Chaplin in 1915, remains the most popular song of the Australian labour movement, a tribute to the IWW role in the anti-conscription movement. Newspaper publicity for Joe Hill’s song presents us with a clear example of eager reporting of IWW lyrical work backfiring and actually feeding the song into the popular imagination and repertory. The phrase “Crude Doggerel” is an interesting case of a misjudged sneer from the sub-editor. Anyone who has memorised and performed IWW songs is unlikely to be concerned about their apparent lack of poetic value. The popularity of such narrative verse might instead depend on its stridently vernacular approach, and the ease with which it can be memorised.

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One of the earliest Australian anti-conscription songs was composed in 1914 by the redoubtable Hunter region coal miner and prolific poet Josiah Cocking.

**Slavery Again.**

*I am thinking to-day
Of the curse that shall not stay–
The Conscription Act of Fisher and the Trust!
They instruct each worker's boy
How to murder and destroy,
And to blast his striking comrades into dust!

When our children leave the schools
They become the War Trust's tools
To defend the land and wealth of those who rob;
From each workshop, mill and mine
Boys are driven out like swine,
To be butchered by the Plutocratic Mob!

They have robbed, the voiceless boys
Of their playtime and its joys,
And deprived them of their liberty and right;
And by brutal human hogs
Boys are trained and cursed like dogs
To prepare for future fratricidal fights!

When our sturdy sons have grown,
They no longer are our own!
They've been bartered to the War Trust, and are slaves!
Who, when wholesale murderers pay,
Will be ordered out to slay,
By the Gang that robs the pots to fill the graves!

They will ship boys o'er the main,
There to slay or there be slain
By the workers whom warmongers eke coerce,
And who, much against their will,
Are compelled to shoot and kill,
That each vampire in the Trust may fill his purse.

In the chilly winter's flood
Boys will shed each other's blood,
And destroy like frenzied devils loosed in hell,
Whilst, each statesman, parson, priest,
Safe at home enjoys the feast
That's provided by the murder tools they sell!

When shall workers all awake
And this rolling planet take
From the parasites whose thefts and wars cause dearth?
When shall Truth and Freedom rise,
And all workers fraternise.
Thirty-Nine Articles of a No-Conscriptionist’s Faith:

Conscription is despotism, mental and moral.

Conscription is the negation of democracy.

Conscription destroys individuality and crushes conscience.

Conscription is based on the barbarism “might is right.”

Conscription puts military before civil law.

Conscription sounds the death knell of trades unionism, and spells industrial coercion.

Conscription is the protoge of the war-mongers.

Conscription is classed for by those exempt; parishes, parsons, politicians and pettifog prigs.

Conscription is the foster child of the armament rings.

Conscription stands on the exploded gallery “if you want peace, prepare for war.”

Conscription is approved by ecclesiastics; its severest condemnation.

Conscription takes peaceable men and bursts them in deadly conflict against brothers with whom they have no quarrel.

Conscription, when once imposed is rarely, if ever, reversible.

Conscription in Australia will produce the gravest conflict for which we are ever faced.

Conscription should be negated by every mother, otherwise she may sign the death warrant of her own son, or it may be another mother’s son.

Conscription is an immorality, and a thousand redundancies cannot make it moral.

Conscription outrages a Britisher’s trust ideals and traditions.

Conscription has made no appreciable difference to the fighting force of England, whilst it has created a moral immiseration with its consequent objectors.

Conscription in Australia will not hasten the end of the war by one five minutes.

Conscription takes the breadwinner of the poor wife, mother and child, but never the bread-winner of the rich wife, mother, child.

Conscription is as such as think “the country rotten to the core and not worth fighting for” (vide Mr. Hughes).

Conscription has landed Europe in hell.

Conscription keeps her there.

Conscription has sent 500,000 British children of school age into the munition and other factories.

Conscription yokes women and males together to ploughing the fields of conscripted Europe.

Conscription is Toryism, Jingoism, Protection.

Conscription means that within a year after the passing of the Referendum every male between 18 and 45 will have been conscripted.

Conscription breaks the heart, blunts the home, and blights the soul.

Conscription, the knell of a thousand conscriptionists; politicians, the those who have heeded Mr. Hughes in the same direction.

Conscription for Australia means a war tax of £5 a year for every unit of her population.

Conscription is a cattle drive, and the creatures yarded are less than sheep.

Conscription creates the Censor.

Conscription is the last refuge of the political plunger.

Conscription in the hands of William of Lyonmont will be as pernicious as conscription in the hands of William of Potsdam.

Conscription is a denial of God, a sin of man, and a rejection of the one vital principle for which the blood of the freed and died.

When Joseph Chamberlain per-petrated that South African blag-phony, the war against the Boers be glorified in the fact that all the Churches were with him. Mr. Hughes can now claim the same satisfaction in his design to enslave the Australian democracy.

Syndical, Conferences, and Free-teries are with him, and this is one reason why his proposals are likely to misfire, for the workers will not attach the Churches support.

“Object at any time, against my will, to kill somebody else against his will, at the will of somebody else that won’t kill.”—Mr. W. 15.

Compulsions, clerical and po- litical, who won’t do the killing might censure on these words a few moments before saying their prayers.

The argument of conscriptionists that the more men Australia can throw into the war the sooner it will end, is the argument of the simpleton who says the more in-flammable material you bring to fire the sooner it will extinguish. But for conscription, this hell-fire of Europe would have been out long ago. Australia is now asked to put her last man into the blaze, in order to stop it. Can simplicity go further?

OH MOTHERS OF MEN!

Oh mothers of men, in the prison of war, I call you. With martial clampise to their red campaign, They drape with burning chains that will enthrall you. When they have seared your souls with brand of Cain. Oh mothers behold! the flames of Morochyarning. This griming god sits on his fiery throne. Will you give up your children to the burning? Oh mothers of men! vote No and save your sons. The hour draws near, who will you vote for them, Moroch or Christ? Think! Oh mothers of men.

Oh mothers of men, whose sons like lassled cattle Are rounded up for Nero’s gaul house. Will mother-love prove to be idle prattle Or holy womanhood, a mighty power? Hark! from the ring appealing souls are crying. Thumbs up! Thumbs up! though the issue may arise. Man born of woman, unto woman crying. Up mothers of men, vote No and save your own. The hour draws near, who will you vote for thee, Nero or Christ? Think! Oh mothers of men.

Oh mothers of men, the homage and the glory Are not for those who pull the gallow gads. The slaves who fight in chains and fetters gory. Would scour the victories of a thousand years. Stain not Australia, Conscription is pollution. Let not the children of the years to be, Cry shame upon us, for our persecu- tion. But rather bless us, that we keep them free. The hour draws near, who will you vote for them, Devil or Christ? Think! Oh mothers of men.

—M. Browne, Drummoynye.

“It will take a good deal to convince me that conscription in Australia will not cause more evil than it would avert.”

Stain not Australia, Conscription is pollution, Let not the children of the years to be, Cry shame upon us, for their persecution, But rather bless us, that we kept them free. The hour draws near, who will you vote for them, Devil or Christ? Think! Oh mothers of men.

The same page of the Sydney Australian Worker has two more anti-conscription poems ‘What To Trust?” by Harold Mercer and ‘Australia’ by W.R. Winspear. Australia ends with the lines—

Beware the slaver’s voice, the hidden snare
Of iron bonds, with care and watchfulness
Beware his “Call for Blood,” have thou to share
With him who’d have thee write the FAIRL YES.’

Equating the pro-conscription campaign with a ‘Call for Blood’ echoes the full page cartoon and poem titled ‘The Blood Vote’ in the same issue on page 11. That poem was also written by Winspear, while the cartoon accompanying it had a devil like Billy Hughes skulking behind the anxious woman casting her YES vote, as seen on the front page of this collection. Among its six verses are the lines—

They put a dagger into my grasp. It seemed but a pencil then; I did not know it was fiend -a-gasp
For the priceless blood of men

They gave me the ballot paper. The grim death-warrant of doom. And I solemnly sentenced the man to death
In that dreadful little room

The 1916 Anti-Conscription League flyer Thirty-Nine Articles of a No-Conscriptionist’s Faith’ published in Sydney under the auspices of Trades Hall. This page contains one poem ‘Oh Mothers of Men!’ composed by “M. Browne, Drummoynye.” This poem ends with the words—