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British Quakers and the Campaign Against Compulsory Military Training in New Zealand 1909—1914

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The Defence Acts of 1909 introduced compulsory military training to both New Zealand and Australia. In both countries, anti-militarist movements opposed the Acts, with some considerable success, but this opposition has received far more attention in Australia than in New Zealand. Moreover, the role of the Religious Society of Friends, whilst extensively studied in Australia, has been largely ignored in New Zealand. The parent body in England provided both full-time workers for the cause and extensive funding to support the campaign. This article traces the origins and development of Quaker involvement in the anti-militarist struggle, arguing that it was crucial to its success, whilst also suggesting that it contributed to an increasing unity of purpose amongst New Zealand Quakers.

Introduction

In 1909, almost identical Defence Acts requiring compulsory military training for youths and young men passed virtually unnoticed through the parliaments of New Zealand and Australia. Implementation of the Acts provoked vigorous, albeit minority, opposition in both countries; a cause that attracted a coalition of socialists, anti-militarists, libertarians and religious pacifists, and which embraced anti-conscription, civil liberties and the rights of the conscientious objector. The Religious Society of Friends, although small in numbers, played a leading role in these campaigns. The Australian anti-conscription movement has received detailed examination by historians,[1] as has the role of the Society.[2] There, as John Barrett has pointed out, 'the Quakers managed to be nearly everywhere in the anti-conscription movement.'[3] In New Zealand, however, the arguably more successful opposition to the Defence Act has received less attention and the role of the Religious Society of Friends has either been ignored or significantly underestimated.

This article aims to redress this oversight. First, I examine the reasons for the involvement of British Quaker organisations, especially London Yearly Meeting (LYM) and Meeting for Sufferings, and also of individual Quakers, in the campaign against compulsory military training. I will argue that their financial support and the leadership and example of Friends sent out from Britain were crucial to that campaign. Moreover, Quakers both in Great Britain and in New Zealand alerted British public opinion to the introduction of conscription in two of its colonies, and to its consequences, thus preparing the ground for opposition to the Military Service Act of 1916 in Britain. British Friends also helped to consolidate and give a sense of purpose to the scattered ranks of Friends in New Zealand.

Geoffrey Troughton and Philip Fountain have suggested that 'there is a far greater national historiography of war and war remembrance than of peace and peaceable protest in New Zealand'.[4] Troughton further argues that where it has been addressed,

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[1] Barrett, J., *Falling In: Australians and 'Boy Conscription'1911–1915*, Sydney: Hale and Ironmonger, 1979; Brock, P., *Against the Draft: Essays on Conscientious Objection from the Radical Reformation to the Second World War*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006, pp.195–221; Thomas W. Tanner, *Compulsory Citizen Soldiers*, Sydney: Alternative Publishing Co-Operative Limited, 1980.

[2] Barrett, *Falling In*; Brock, P., *The Quaker Peace Testimony 1660–1914*, York: Sessions Book Trust, 1990, pp.276–290; Fletcher, J.P. and Hills, J.F., *Conscription Under Camouflage: Compulsory Military Training in Australia*, Adelaide: Co-operative Printing and Publishing Company of South Australia,1919; Jauncey, L.C., *The Story of Conscription in Australia*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1935.

[3] Barrett, *Falling In*, p.108.

[4] Troughton, G., and Fountain, P., 'Pursuing Peace in Godzone', in Troughton, G., and Fountain, P., (eds) *Pursuing Peace in Godzone: Christianity and the Peace Tradition in New Zealand*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2018, p.20.

'religious contributions have not received significant attention',[5] and that they warrant more extensive investigation. One reason, he suggests, is that they sit uneasily with the 'Anzac civil religion', and that they raise questions about 'the shape of nationalist mythologies and implicitly challenge deep-seated ideologies of redemptive violence.'[6] Whereas peace was established early as a central ethical norm of Christianity, that tradition had been fragmented, and the theory of a 'just war' - arguing that war could be sanctified if the goal being pursued and the means being used were just—had become dominant. Set against a prevailing conservatism within New Zealand Christianity, the Quakers consistently styled themselves a 'peace church', their theology exemplified by committed action rather than doctrinal pronouncements. Troughton and Fountain regret the marginalising of religion within public discourse, because 'New Zealand's history is littered with colourful characters and remarkable events in which religious dynamics played a leading role.'[7] This is certainly borne out by the Quaker campaign against compulsory military training between 1909 and 1914. Funding from British Quaker organisations, their supply of literature, and the activism of Friends sent out from Britain helped to establish a peace tradition in New Zealand and to pioneer the kind of anti-militarist and libertarian protest that emerged in the United Kingdom during the First World War in organisations such as the No-Conscription Fellowship.

Compulsory Military Service

Whilst compulsory military service was the norm in Europe at the turn of the twentieth century, a considerable body of British public opinion was strongly against it. As John Rae points out, 'The English had for so long been able to conduct their military affairs without recourse to compulsory recruiting that they had come to regard this method of raising troops as inconsistent with their traditional liberties and alien to their national character.'[8] Freedom of conscience was a dominant theme in arguments relating to conscription, and this was a governing principle for LYM also, enabling it to maintain its unity during the First World War. Neither of the major parties was prepared to support the principle of compulsory military service, 'the Liberals as a matter of principle, the Conservatives as a matter of politics.'[9] Nonetheless, the inadequacies of the British volunteer armies in the South African wars, and rising

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[5] Troughton, G., 'Christianity, Peace and Opposition to War', in Troughton, G. (ed.), *Saints and Stirrers: Christianity, Conflict and Peacemaking in New Zealand, 1814–1945*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2017, p.9.

[6] Troughton, 'Christianity, Peace and Opposition to War', p.12.

[7] Troughton and Fountain, 'Pursuing Peace in Godzone', p.21.

[8] Rae, J., *Conscience and Politics*, London: Oxford University Press, 1970, p.5.

[9] Rae, *Conscience and Politics*, p.7.

concerns about the growing power of Germany, led to an increasing campaign in favour of conscription, led by the National Service League (NSL), formed in 1902. Although the NSL made little progress for some years its propaganda did elicit a response elsewhere in the Empire, especially in Australia and in New Zealand. Both colonies, with only small permanent volunteer armies and larger numbers of militia or territorials, relied on the British Navy for defence. Any collapse of British power would leave its South Pacific dominions exposed to threats from others, the German presence in New Guinea and Samoa was unsettling, and the fear of Japan particularly strong. As Steven Loveridge has pointed out, 'the notion that New Zealand's regional security depended on a British guarantee, and that local efforts to promote imperial unity and to supplement British strength could preserve that guarantee, became core philosophies in defence planning',[10] whilst Ian McGibbon notes that 'most New Zealanders understood the economic importance of the continued availability of the British market, and the importance of keeping the sea routes between the two countries open.'[11] Influential voices, worried by the inefficiencies of the volunteer system, began to argue in favour of compulsory military training. The New Zealand National Defence League (NZDL) was founded in 1906, maintaining strong links with the NSL in the United Kingdom.

This strategic pragmatism was underpinned by a profound cultural and emotional identification with the United Kingdom, an instinctive patriotism of almost religious intensity. As a new and relatively immature colony it had no tradition of non-conformity such as Great Britain had possessed since the Reformation, and by and large it did not and would not tolerate anti-militarist or anti-conscription sentiment. Loveridge has noted that a martial mythology was already a feature of public culture, soldiers seen as embodying the high principles and typical character of the society they fought for.[12] McGibbon suggests that many New Zealanders had a romantic concept of war.[13] There were also concerns about the decadence of modern life, and particularly that youth were becoming ill-disciplined and irresponsible.[14] Surely, instilling soldierly qualities in the young could only be a good thing? Thus, the NZDL was able to gather support from prominent citizens and the press, to put pressure on cautious politicians. The period was marked by a number of policies and initiatives that strengthened New Zealand's

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[10] Loveridge, S., *Calls to Arms: New Zealand Society and Commitment to the Great War*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2014, p.31.

[11] McGibbon, I., 'The Shaping of New Zealand's War Effort August–October 1914', in Crawford, J., and McGibbon, I. (eds), *New Zealand's Great War: New Zealand, the Allies, and the First World War*, Auckland: Exisle Publishing, 2007, p.53.

[12] Loveridge, *Calls to Arms*, Chapter 3.

[13] McGibbon, 'The Shaping of New Zealand's War Effort', p.52.

[14] McGibbon, 'The Shaping of New Zealand's War Effort', p.52; Loveridge, *Calls to Arms*, pp.148–50.

links with Britain. Many of these were imperialistic, and at times overtly militaristic; for example in 1907 the State began publishing the *New Zealand School Journal* in what was a deliberate attempt to inculcate an imperialist ideology.[15] In 1909 the government gifted a Dreadnought battleship, *HMS New Zealand*, to Britain, and in the same year, shortly after the Imperial Navy and Military Conference in London, the Defence Act became law. The New Zealand and the Australian Defence Acts, and the subsequent opposition to them, would influence developments in Great Britain when discussions began regarding the introduction of conscription in 1915.[16]

Opposition to the Defence Act

What then of opposition to the Act? The most detailed account, by R.L. Weitzel,[17] describes a widely based anti-militarist movement, involving trade unions, socialist groups, pacifists, and women's organisations, the unifying factor being opposition to conscription,[18] but he underestimates the role of the Religious Society of Friends, in particular of visiting English Quakers, and the importance of their financial contribution. David Grant does acknowledge the importance of one such visitor, John Percy Fletcher, but fails to place Fletcher in the context of a much wider Quaker campaign.[19] The most recent survey ignores the Quakers altogether.[20] Ryan Bodman and Elsie Locke have argued that the role of the Passive Resisters' Union (PRU) was the most significant aspect of the struggle, whilst ignoring the fact that without funds provided by the Religious Society of Friends much of its work would have been impossible.[21] Women's role in the anti-militarist cause has also been well-documented.[22] The historians of New Zealand Quakerism provide useful biographical details on some of the visiting English Quakers and a brief account of the campaign against military training, but

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15 Malone, E.P., 'The New Zealand School Journal and The Imperial Ideology', *New Zealand Journal of History* (NZJH), 7/1 (1973), pp.12–27.

16 See Rae, J., *Conscience and Politics*, pp.28–32, 49–50.

17 Weitzel, R.L., 'Pacifists and Anti-militarists in New Zealand, 1909–1914', NZJH, 7/2, (1973), pp.128–147.

18 Supporters of the scheme argued that it was not conscription, opponents that it was. I use the word 'conscription' to describe any legal compulsion to perform any kind of military service.

19 Grant, D., 'Where were the Peacemongers? Pacifists in New Zealand during World War 1', in Loveridge, S., (ed), *New Zealand Society at War 1914–1918*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2016, p.221.

20 Waugh, M. N., *Soldier Boys: The Militarisation of Australian and New Zealand Schools for World War 1*, Melbourne: Melbourne Books, 2014.

21 Bodman, R., 'Don't Be a Conscript, Be a Man!' A History of the Passive Resisters' Union 1912–1914', PG Dip Dissertation, University of Auckland, 2010; Locke, E., *Peace People: A History of Peace Activities in New Zealand*, Christchurch: Hazard Press, 1992, pp.43–47.

22 Hutching, M., 'Turn Back this Tide of Barbarism': New Zealand Women Who Were Opposed to War 1896–1919', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1990.

they too under-play the crucial role that these visitors played and the significance of funding from England.[23]

Opponents of the scheme argued that compulsory military training in the colonies was a scheme hatched in the homeland, in the hope that successful conscription there would pave the way for its introduction in Great Britain. Lord Roberts, president of the NSL, wrote that 'if you fail there it will mean that we shall not get it here.'[24] The Religious Society of Friends in England saw it similarly and were alarmed at the news. Herbert Corder, a Sunderland insurance agent, president of the Adult School there, and a member of both the Australasian Committee and the Meeting for Sufferings (1915–1936), suggested that the Defence Acts in Australasia were the work of a 'little clique of military minds 12,000 miles away'.[25] The New Zealand Socialist Party and the Federation of Labour had started to campaign against the Act in 1910, fearing that service could be extended overseas, and that a standing army might be used to crush them.[26]

The implementation of the Act began on 3 April 1911, the first step being the compulsory registration of all young men between the ages of 14 and 20. When the Defence Department attempted to involve the churches in the registration of boys, Charles Mackie, leader of the Baptist Lay Preachers' Association in Christchurch, was incensed at the failure of church ministers to oppose the scheme, and called for passive resistance. The Association held a meeting on 23 May and passed a resolution condemning those ministers and churches 'that have fostered and abetted the spirit of jingoistic militarism instead of strenuously opposing it from the beginning.'[27] Christchurch, New Zealand's oldest city and the largest on the South Island, prided itself on its English identity and firmly identified itself as part of the British Empire through its street names.[28] However, from the late nineteenth century, it also developed an identity as a radical stronghold.'[29] Indeed Katie Pickles has suggested that 'New

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[23] West, M., and Fawell, R., *The Story of New Zealand Quakerism 1842–1972*, Auckland: New Zealand Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends, 1973. See also Adams, K.R., 'The Growth and Development of the Society of Friends 1840–1920', MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 1986, pp.142–169.

[24] Bracher, S.V., *RIPA ISLAND: A Lesson for Conscriptionists*, London: Friends Peace Committee, 1913, p.15.

[25] *The Friend*, 9 January 1914, p.25.

[26] Olssen, E., *The Red Feds: Revolutionary Industrial Unionism and The New Zealand Federation of Labour 1908–1913*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1988, pp.54–55.

[27] Mackie, C., *Report of the Work of the National Peace Council from its Inception*, pp.2–3,2017.38.1429,Mackie Papers, Canterbury Museum (CM), Christchurch.

[28] Cookson, J., 'Pilgrims' Progress – Image, Identity and Myth in Christchurch', in Cookson, J. and Dunstall, G., (eds), *Southern Capital: Christchurch: Towards a City Biography, 1850–2000*, Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2000, pp.13–40.

[29] McAloon, J., 'Radical Christchurch', in Cookson and Dunstall, (eds), *Southern Capital: Christchurch*, pp.162–92.

Zealand would be a different country without the city's radical streak.'[30] In June 1911, Mackie and Louis P. Christie founded the National Peace and Anti-Militarist Council in Christchurch. Previous accounts have mistakenly referred to an Anti-Militarist League being formed a year earlier, in June 1910.[31] This seems to have arisen from a misunderstanding of an interview with Louis Christie in November 1911, when he said that the League had started 'last June.'[32] Tellingly there is no mention of the organisation in press reports for 1910. However, two separate organisations very quickly emerged, with both the National Peace and Anti-Militarist Council (NPC) and the Christchurch Anti-Militarist League (AML) holding meetings on 18 August 1911.[33] The AML was a local membership organisation supporting young men resisting military training and raising public awareness via leafletting, public meetings and the distribution of literature. September 1911 saw the first issue of *The Anti-Militarist,* and by the end of the year there were 16 branches. The NPC aimed to be a representative organisation with a national co-ordinating role, educating public opinion and campaigning for the settlement of international disputes via arbitration.[34]

The Baptist Lay Preachers' Association was by no means representative of established religion, nor even of its own church, Laurie Guy noting that 'imperial spectacles', were the 'viewing lens' for New Zealand Baptists in the build-up to the First World War.[35] As Chris Marshall has pointed out, 'the official voice of the church has seldom functioned as a major impediment to warfare, and all too often has been commandeered in support of it.'[36] Imperial loyalty, a desire for respectability, notions of duty and sacrifice, the idea that religion was an important element of national unity, the theory of a just war, had all contributed to marginalising the religious peace tradition in New Zealand. During the South African war (1899–1902), when New Zealand sent 6,500 mounted troops to assist the British forces, few voices were raised in protest—Presbyterian minister Rutherford Waddell in Dunedin and Baptist minister Joseph Doke in Christchurch being exceptions. Waddell, however, would later support participation in the First World War, viewing it as a just war. The campaign against compulsory military training similarly gained

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30 Pickles K., *Christchurch Ruptures*, Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2016, p.66.

31 For example Locke, *Peace People*, p.35 and Weitzel,' Pacifists and Anti-Militarists', p.129.

32 *Maoriland Worker* (*MW*), 24 November 1911, p.17.

33 *Christchurch Anti-Militarist League Minute Book*, 18 August 1911, Lincoln Efford Papers, MS-Papers-0445-067, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; *National Peace and Anti-Militarist Council Minute Book*, 18 August 1911, Richard Thompson Papers, 524:59695, MacMillan Brown Library, Christchurch.

34 I am grateful to Margaret Lovell-Smith for sharing with me her research into the history of the two organisations.

35 Guy L., 'Early Christian Pacifists in Christchurch: Creating division in the Fight For Peace', Paper presented to the Anglican Pacifist Society meeting, 26 August 2006, p.4.

36 Marshall C., 'Remembering Jesus on Anzac Day: Just War or Just another War?', in Troughton and Fountain, *Pursuing Peace in Godzone*, p.215.

support from individual ministers, but not from the churches as a whole. The Reverend Charles Murray, clerk to the Christchurch Presbytery, was an outspoken opponent of the Defence Act, appearing regularly on National Peace Council platforms to proclaim the original peace message of the Christian faith. Methodist minister D. McNicoll, secretary of the Christchurch Ministers' Association, was also vehement in his opposition, and was elected president of the AML. However, when he moved a motion at the Methodist Conference to abolish compulsory military training as 'un-scriptural, anti-Christian, and an outrage on the liberty of the Christian conscience', it was defeated by a large majority.[37] Another clergyman, the Reverend R.J. Hall, became chairman of the New Zealand Freedom League in 1913. Mackie, however, paid special tribute to the support and work of the Religious Society of Friends.[38]

The Religious Society of Friends in New Zealand

Quakers had a standing witness and testimony against all war and military preparations. They perceived militarism 'as a hydra-headed conspiracy, antithetical to Christianity and to their historic peace testimony.'[39] They felt that the New Zealand Defence Act overthrew British traditions of freedom and conscience and violated the sacred rights of parental control. It amounted to the military indoctrination of youth, it interfered with their education, and it was morally dangerous; they objected particularly to the immorality of camp life. However, it should be noted that freedom of conscience was a governing principle of all members, and that there were differences of opinion, for example over the question of alternative service.

The number of Quakers in New Zealand was very small, although there is some disagreement as to their actual membership. The religious census of April 1911 recorded 412 members,[40] whereas Roger T. Stearn puts the Society's membership much lower, at 143, just before the war.[41] The discrepancy might be explained by a memorial from the Society in London late in 1913, which suggested that there were some 380 members and associates, or attenders, in New Zealand.[42] Stearn might therefore be referring to full members only. They were barely organised and hamstrung by the geography of the country. The North and South Islands are divided by the Cook Strait, the country is mountainous and prone to earthquakes and flooding, many settlements in the

[37] *Marlborough Express*, 15 February 1913, p.3.

[38] Mackie, *Report of the Work of the National Peace Council*, pp.8–9.

[39] Stearn R., 'Edwardian Peace Testimony: British Quakers against Militarism and Conscription c1902–1914', *The Journal of the Friends Historical Society* (JFHS) , 62/1,(2010), p.50.

[40] *Auckland Star* (hereafter *AS*), 25 November 1911, p.11.

[41] Stearn, 'Edwardian Peace Testimony', p.65.

[42] *New Zealand Times*, 20 December 1913, p.9.

nineteenth century were extremely isolated and travel conditions very difficult. In 1859 the fastest journey possible from Dunedin to Auckland took 15 days, although by the end of the century that had been reduced to three.[43] Yet they were visible as opponents of militarism from the outset. When the two sons of Thomas Mason, the first Quaker to settle in New Zealand, reached the age for compulsory militia service in 1864, they appealed and were exempted. In 1896 the Governor-General, using powers delegated to him by Parliament, signed an Order in Council requiring applicants for the junior civil service to undertake three years' service in the Volunteers. The order was challenged by Quakers objecting to this interference with the rights of conscience. Auckland Friends were influential in the local branch of the International Arbitration and Peace Association, which strongly condemned the newly formed Defence League as 'tending to encourage the spirit of militarism', and emphatically protested against the principle of compulsory military training.[44] In the election year of 1908, the Quakers sent a letter to all candidates voicing their opposition to universal military training. At one stage they seriously contemplated mass emigration if it was implemented.[45]

Visiting Quakers

There was also a tradition of itinerant Quakers coming to the colony to assist the scattered Friend settlers. New Zealand and Australian Quakers came under the authority of the London Yearly Meeting (LYM). In 1903 the Meeting established an Australia Committee, and in 1906 extended this to New Zealand, re-naming it the Australasian Committee. Concerned for the isolated condition of Friends in New Zealand, the Committee authorised Sarah Jane Lury and Elizabeth Rutter (pictured in **Figure 1**, below) to travel there, with two aims. First, to establish a hostel in Wellington where children from the country districts might live whilst attending a good school, and where they might be 'assured of the advantages of a Quaker background'.[46] The hostel was opened in early 1909. Secondly, Lury and Rutter were to prepare a Friends' Conference as a means of bringing Friends together. In this they were assisted by Thomas Hodgkin, on a visit approved by the Meeting for Sufferings. Hodgkin was 'a man of immense standing amongst Friends' and a historian of some note, his magnum opus an eight-volume work on the history of wars in the late Roman Empire.[47] The Conference was held in

[43] King, M., *The Penguin History of Aotearoa New Zealand*, Auckland: Penguin Random House New Zealand, 3rd edn, 2023, p.220.

[44] *New Zealand Herald* (hereafter *NZH*), 6 October 1906, p.9.

[45] Hirst, M. E., *The Quakers in Peace and War, An Account of Their Principles and Practice*, London: Swarthmore Press, 1923, p.490.

[46] West and Fawell, *The Story of New Zealand Quakerism*, p.38.

[47] Adams, 'The Growth and Development of the Society of Friends in New Zealand', p.138.

Wellington from 8–12 May 1909 and proved to be an important first step towards transforming New Zealand Quakers into an organised body. These conferences became annual events, held in different centres, and in 1914 LYM gave them Quarterly Meeting status.

A conscience clause

The Australasian Committee was already alarmed by the proposed Defence Act, and Hodgkin was also charged with attempting to secure a conscience clause for religious objectors. A deputation to see the Minister of Defence on 5 December 1909 recorded with satisfaction that those where the 'doctrines of their religion' forbade the bearing of arms could plead exemption.[48] This concession was undoubtedly due both to the Quakers' long-standing and respected reputation as a peace church world-wide, and to their record of opposing military service in New Zealand dating back to the Mason case in 1864. However, exemption could only be claimed from combatant duties, which would satisfy the faith parameters of Seventh Day Adventists, but not of Quakers or Christadelphians. Furthermore, the potential objector had first to register, enrol, take the oath of allegiance, and be ordered to parade *before* stating his religious objection to bearing arms. Few objectors found this acceptable, and certainly not the Quakers. Finally, the Act made a curious distinction between religious objectors and conscientious objectors, entitling only the former to claim exemption.[49]

The issue immediately caused controversy amongst Quakers in New Zealand. Thomas Wright in Auckland argued that 'the exemption is ours and in justice to ourselves we should respectfully claim it.'[50] Others were not so sure. Was accepting alternative service tantamount to recognising the authority of the Act? Was it right that Quakers be exempted, but others appealing on grounds of conscience were not? This was to become central to Quaker arguments against the Defence Act, as they defended the rights of all those who objected to their call up on conscientious grounds. Interestingly, there are no confirmed examples of Quakers appealing for exemption, or of Quakers appearing before the courts. By their own admission, there were few Quakers of an appropriate age to be caught up by the scheme.[51] It is also possible that the Authorities steered clear of a confrontation with an organisation with the moral authority and reputation of the Religious Society of Friends. There is evidence to support this, with parents negotiating with the military authorities prior to the Act being enforced, and one boy promised

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[48] West and Fawell, *The Story of New Zealand Quakerism*, p.66.

[49] Brock, *Against the Draft*, p.212.

[50] *Australian Friend* (hereafter *AF)*, 20 December 1910, p.427.

[51] *AF*, 20 December 1910, p.427.

exemption from training as long as he enlisted with the St John Ambulance Association.[52] This may also help to explain why the Quakers have received far less attention in New Zealand than in Australia, where several Quaker boys were imprisoned and suffered harsh treatment.[53] What it does demonstrate is their commitment to upholding their historic peace testimony, where they could easily have accepted the conscience clause and opted for a quiet life.

Herbert Corder and his wife Mary were authorised by the Meeting for Sufferings to investigate, arriving in March 1911. Corder spoke at many meetings in opposition to the Act, for example an address on 'Militarism and International Relations' at a large and successful meeting in Christchurch on 10 July 1911.[54] Although he claimed that he had never spoken from a public platform prior to his visit to New Zealand, he attracted large audiences and clearly made an impression: for example, the *Wairarapa Daily Times* reported that Corder provided 'as convincing an exposition of the anti-militarist cause as it would be possible to find'.[55]

The 3rd Conference of New Zealand Friends in May 1911 decided that Friends should register their sons in accordance with the law but state clearly that they had a conscientious objection to serving, whilst willing to render service of an equivalent nature.[56] A warning by LYM in 1911 against 'undertaking services auxiliary to warfare in positions where they would be under military orders', was included in the *Book of Discipline* as revised in 1912, a direct result of the Australasian situation.[57] One of Corder's last acts, before leaving New Zealand at the beginning of September 1911, was to accompany a deputation of New Zealand Friends to see Major-General Godley, Commander -in-Chief of the New Zealand military forces. Godley had been sent out from Britain in December 1910 to oversee the implementation of the Defence Act and to re-organise the country's military. The deputation aimed to try to reach agreement as to how they could serve the government in a non-combatant role and under civil rather than military auspices. Godley suggested ambulance work but would not agree to the St John Ambulance service because it was outside of his control. This issue of who would control the work of conscientious objectors if they accepted alternative service—the civil or the military authorities—would remain a major stumbling block to reaching an agreement.

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[52] *AF*, 20 December 1910, pp.426–7.

[53] See, for example, Brock, *Against the Draft*, pp.195–221.

[54] *Press*, 11 July 1911, p.9.

[55] *Wairarapa Daily Times*, 22 September 1911, p.4.

[56] *Lyttelton Times* (hereafter *LT)*, 11 August 1911, p.10.

[57] Hirst, *The Quakers in Peace and War*, p.490.

Upon their return to England, the Corders reported to a meeting of the Australasian Committee of the Religious Society of Friends in January 1912. Consequently, a new committee was established, the Joint Committee of Australasian Defence Acts, to act in an advisory role for Friends in both New Zealand and Australia. 'For our generation', said the Committee, 'the crucial struggle is being waged there', and 'our liberties depend on the result.'[58] The Society agreed to provide funds and literature, and to support any legal challenges to the Defence Acts.

Registration and Prosecutions

When registration in New Zealand was completed on 17 July 1911, roughly 25 per cent of those eligible for the Senior Cadets and Territorials had failed to register, although only a small number were conscientious objectors. Prosecutions quickly followed, and selectively targeted those visible in the protest movement.[59] Thomas Nuttall of the Linwood Baptist Church in Christchurch was prosecuted 'because he had posed prominently in the public eye as a resistant to the compulsory military training.'[60] Christadelphian Peter Thompson protested at his son's prosecution, asking why he had been singled out when thousands of defaulters were ignored.[61] When a younger son was also called up in 1913, the family returned to the UK, having been in New Zealand for 11 years. Two objectors, William Cornish from Wellington and Harry Cooke from Christchurch, son of prominent Socialist Fred Cooke, refused to pay their fines and were subsequently imprisoned for 21 days. Middle-class liberal opinion was outraged that boys could be incarcerated alongside common criminals for following their conscience, and the resulting outcry led the Liberal government to suspend prosecutions in August 1911. With a general election approaching it had no wish to make compulsory military training a political issue. Perhaps encouraged by this, a delegation from the Religious Society of Friends met the Minister of Education later in the year and informed him that that they would undertake no alternative service if it was under military control,[62] and that exemptions on the grounds of conscience should not be restricted solely to religious objectors.

When prosecutions were renewed early in 1912, a Passive Resisters' Union (PRU) was formed by a group of apprentices based at the Addington Railway Workshops in

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[58] *Friend*, 27 March 1913, p.123.

[59] Weitzel, 'Pacifists and Anti-militarists', pp.132 and 134.

[60] *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates*, 1911, 155, p.341, quoted in Guy,' Early Christian Pacifists', p.7.

[61] *MW*, 1 December 1912, p.12.

[62] *AS*, 11 July 1911, p.5.

Christchurch, pledging 'to resist coercion, conscription, and compulsory military training under all circumstances, and in defiance of all pains and penalties which may be imposed.'[63] It subscribed to the principles of international socialism, emphasising the bonds between workers in all countries, and focussed on the denial of liberty and the dangers of a standing army; the PRU adopted civil disobedience from the outset. Membership was limited to those liable to be conscripted. We thus see three groups in opposition to the Defence Act at the beginning of 1912: the NPC, the AML, and the PRU. In all cases membership and activity was strongest in the South Island, and Christchurch in particular, where Steven Loveridge has suggested that 'something akin to a culture war was waged.'[64]

Support from Quakers in Great Britain

Quakers in New Zealand had begun to receive funds from England to help them combat the Act. This funding would prove to be absolutely vital to the campaign. Using reports in the minutes of the Australasian Defence Acts Committee and correspondence in the Mackie Collection, I have estimated that a minimum of £1,783 was sent to New Zealand, a significant figure, the modern equivalent of over £207,000.[65] This is even more startling when one considers that equivalent amounts were sent to support the Australian campaign. Mackie reported that, between 1912 and 1915, over 656,000 leaflets and pamphlets had been printed or distributed, much of it imported from England via the Religious Society of Friends or funded by them.[66] The production and distribution of literature was a key weapon in the campaign, vital for educating and alerting public opinion, and one notable beneficiary was the PRU journal *The Repeal.* The NPC and the Quakers collaborated in the publication of W.H.F. Alexander's pamphlet *The Peril to Civil and Religious Liberty from Modern Imperialism,* where he argued that the Empire was based on a military autocracy and that the Defence Acts were a manifestation of that.[67]

Other money went for the hire of meeting halls, legal fees to assist young men brought before the courts, and the payment of fines. Significantly, it was also used to support organisers sent out from England. These full-time workers for the cause would be of inestimable value to what was otherwise a purely volunteer movement.

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[63] *Press*, 9 February 1912, p.6.

[64] Loveridge, *Calls to Arms*, p.115.

[65] Library of the Society of Friends (LSF), YM/MfS/ANZC; Mackie Collection, CM.

[66] *List of leaflets either published or received*, 15 October 1915, 2017.38.1466 Mackie Papers, CM.

[67] Alexander, W.H.F., *The Peril to Civil and Religious Liberty from Modern Imperialism*, Auckland, Reliance Print, 1913.

After the Corders' visit other English Quakers followed, including Dr J. H. Thorp, who, it was reported, was 'taking an active part in making our efforts known throughout the city' of Wellington.[68] Thorp had been a physician in the slums of Liverpool before going to Australia in 1911 as temporary Headmaster of the Friends' School in Hobart. There he became actively involved in the opposition to the Defence Act. In September 1912, a Friends' Peace Deputation was sent out from London by the LYM, consisting of William and Harriet Alexander and Alfred Brown. Their aim, said the *New Zealand Herald*, was to 'tour the Dominion on a peace mission and to unite all Quakers residing in the country.'[69] Brown arrived in Christchurch at the beginning of November 1912, before travelling south, but thereafter he spent much of his time in Australia. The Alexanders arrived in Auckland shortly afterwards. William Alexander, a teacher and insurance broker, had served on many of the LYM's central committees, including as clerk to the Defence Acts Committee; he had visited concentration camps in South Africa on behalf of the Friends' Relief Committee, and had been Head of the Friends' School in Hobart for a year. The Alexanders focussed their attention on the North Island, where they found organising opposition to the Act difficult, bewailing the lack of committed workers. They did, however, visit Christchurch in January 1913, and spoke admiringly of the city as the centre of activity.[70] They worked tirelessly in Auckland, along with Egerton Gill, a young Quaker who was instrumental in the founding of the New Zealand Freedom League in March 1913. Auckland eventually became a stronghold of anti-militarism on the North Island, but Wellington proved harder to organise, Mackie suggesting that this was because of the large number of government employees there.[71]

What also helped Quakers in New Zealand were close ties with family in England. John Holdsworth of Havelock North acted as one conduit for funds sent from there, and his brother Charles, with whom he was in daily correspondence for over half a century, was a constant support for the campaign. John Howell, Director of Christchurch Technical College, was another who kept family in England informed of events and helped to distribute funds. Howell's wife Ellen helped run the NPC office during Mackie's absences.[72] Of particular importance was Alfred Gregory (pictured in **Figure 1**,

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[68] *Repeal*, July 1913, p.7.

[69] *NZH*, 23 November 1912, p.8.

[70] West and Fawell, *The Story of New Zealand Quakerism*, p.68.

[71] Mackie, *Report of the Work of the National Peace Council*, p.5.

[72] Lovell-Smith, M., 'Ellen and John Howell: Active members of the National Peace Council', *Voices Against War: Courage, Conviction and Conscientious Objection in WWI Canterbury*, http://voicesagainstwar.nz/exhibits/show/women-peace-makers/ellen-and-john-howell-active, 2016 (accessed: 15/04/2024).

below) in Dargaville, whose brother, Thomas Churchus Gregory,[73] in Bristol, mounted 'a virtual one-man crusade' against the Defence Acts.[74] Writing to Charles Mackie at the end of 1912, Alfred admitted, rather shamefacedly, that 'The only real work I have done against the Defence Act in New Zealand was to find my brother Tom for you – it has evidently made him a busy man.'[75] This was something of an understatement.

Thomas Churchus Gregory

Thomas Gregory, who worked at a printing works, was a member of the Bristol Friends' Peace Federation. His hitherto peaceful life in Bristol was transformed when he received a copy of the New Zealand Defence Act in 1909. Knowing of the active campaign being pursued by the National Service League in England, Thomas Gregory was astounded to discover that British colonies were introducing compulsory military training. Fearing that this was a Trojan Horse for its introduction in Great Britain, he wrote and published a leaflet to alert Quakers and others in Bristol and embarked upon an unceasing campaign of opposition to conscription. Despite his chronic asthma Gregory's energy was prodigious; at least 10 leaflets and pamphlets were issued over the next two years, either written or published by him. Some ran to several editions and had print runs of thousands; for example, the fourth edition of *Warning to Emigrants: New Zealand: Plain Facts About Conscription*, published in January 1913, had a run of 25,000.[76] Gregory focussed in particular on warning prospective emigrants to New Zealand that they, or their children, would be liable for military training upon arrival. The London Correspondent of the Christchurch *Press* reported on the widespread circulation of *Warning to Emigrants*, 'a very questionable and damnatory pamphlet', in districts from which 'we get our best emigrants', and he urged readers 'to counteract the continued defamation of the Dominion.'[77]

Gregory's letters to the press clearly rankled Colonel Keene of the NSL and led to a heated debate in the pages of the *Western Daily Press*.[78] He attended meetings of the NSL and questioned the speakers, and he challenged the New Zealand High Commissioner in London, Sir Thomas Mackenzie, on several occasions, prompting the latter to protest against the 'flood' of literature distributed by the Bristol Peace Federation.

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[73] Lovell-Smith, M., 'Help from Abroad: T.C.Gregory and the Advice to Immigrants Campaign', *Voices Against War*, https://voicesagainstwar.nz/exhibits/show/pre-war-anti-militarism-and-th/help-from-abroad--t--c--gregor, 2020 (accessed: 15/04/2024).

[74] Weitzel, 'Pacifists and Anti- militarists', p.143.

[75] Alfred Gregory to Charles Mackie, 30 November *1912*, 2017.38.3537, Mackie Papers, CM.

[76] Lovell-Smith, 'Help from Abroad'.

[77] *Press*, 12 December 1911, p.3.

[78] *Western Daily Press*, 30 April, 28 May, 23 September, 4 October 1912.

Writing to the *Manchester Guardian*, Mackenzie said that 'the gratuitous advice and indignation of outsiders is not required, nor indeed, greatly heeded.'[79] Gregory was also subjected to vehement criticism in the New Zealand press.[80] His appeals for funds to support the anti-conscription campaigns in New Zealand and Australia resulted in numerous donations, whilst Herbert Corder mounted a nationwide speaking tour and wrote a series of leaflets to publicise the cause. The Sellar family, who had only emigrated to New Zealand in 1911, returned to England in 1913 after two of their sons were imprisoned in Wanganui Gaol for refusing military training, and provided further publicity and impetus for the campaign.[81] Gregory became a conduit for accounts of the New Zealand experience and undoubtedly helped to inform Britain's own anti-conscription campaign of the likely consequences of what the NSL had in mind. Historian Cyril Pearce has suggested that he 'probably helped thwart the NSL's ambitions for Britain.'[82]

Not all Quakers approved of such a 'politicised' campaign. Some were disturbed at the prospect of working with Socialists and wanted the Quakers to stand on religious grounds alone. Indeed the Joint Committee on Australasian Compulsory Military Training sent a letter to the Friends Annual Meeting in Havelock North in 1913 saying that opposition to the Acts 'should be on religious grounds and not political.'[83] However, collaboration between Quakers and Socialists was a feature of the struggle, and J.H. Thorp lambasted the churches for sheltering behind boy conscripts and allowing the Socialists to lead the campaign against conscription.[84] Their recognition of human brotherhood and the sacredness of life, he said, revealed 'the Divine in the Socialist.'[85] Interestingly, the Meeting for Sufferings was 'not sufficiently agreed' to endorse a letter from the Defence Acts Committee to the meeting at Havelock North, supporting their opposition to any clause which did not include all conscientious objectors; it did, however, encourage the Defence Acts Committee 'to send it on their own responsibility.'[86] Opposition to the conscience clause was clearly not unanimous.

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[79] *Manchester Guardian*, 6 November 1912, p.4.

[80] *Observer*, 7 June 1913, p.3; *AS* 10 and 16 May 1916, p.4.

[81] Others to emigrate included the Christchurch Baptist D. W. Jones and his family, who went to British Colombia.

[82] Pearce, C., *Communities of Resistance: Conscience and Dissent in Britain During the First World War*, London: Francis Boutle Publishers, 2020, p.180.

[83] The Joint Committee on Australasian Compulsory Military Training to the New Zealand Society of Friends, 6 February 1913, Library of the Society of Friends (LSF), YM/MFS/ANZC.

[84] *Dominion*, 19 May 1913, p.3.

[85] *Evening Post*, 17 May 1913, p.9.

[86] LSF, YM/MfS/ANZC, 6 February 2013.

OPPOSED TO THE COMPULSORY CLAUSES OF THE DEFENCE ACT "THAT UNJUSTLY ENCROACH UPON THE LIBERTIES WHICH ARE OUR CHRISTIAN HERITAGE":
DELEGATES TO THE CONFERENCE OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS IN NEW ZEALAND, HELD IN AUCKLAND DURING EASTER. J. Jamieson, Photo.

Figure 1: First Annual Meeting of the New Zealand Society of Friends, Auckland, Easter 1914. Alfred Gregory: back row 3rd from right. Margaret Lloyd: 3rd row, 5th from left. Elizabeth Rutter: bottom row (excluding children), 2nd from left, holding baby. John Percy Fletcher: bottom row (excluding children), 6th from right, holding baby.
Auckland Weekly News on 23 April 1914. Reproduced with permission from Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections, AWNS-19140423-40-01 (photographer John Jamieson).

In July 1914, Thomas Gregory wrote to Mackie that he would have to reduce his workload due to ill health. Just three months later he was dead. Those in New Zealand were highly appreciative of his efforts. Mackie was in no doubt that his labours in the anti-conscription cause had hastened his demise. The Christchurch AML minute book records that Gregory, 'practically an invalid … was working tooth and nail to promote peace.'[87] As his brother Alfred said, 'all his life's work he crammed into the last three years of it.'[88] *Repeal*, the journal of the PRU, paid tribute to 'the energetic and capable peace advocate of Bristol, England',[89] whilst the *Maoriland Worker* observed that 'The name of Mr T. C. Gregory has become quite a household name amongst peace workers in New Zealand … He wore himself out in the Cause. Gregory was a marvel.'[90]

The re-instatement of prosecutions in early 1912, and the subsequent imprisonment of young conscientious objectors, caused public outrage. Sarah Saunders Page, for example, prominent in the Canterbury women's movement,[91] and a regular attender at Christchurch Friends' Meetings for Worship, commented that it forced her to become

[87] *Christchurch A-ML Minute Book*, 26 November 1914.

[88] Alfred Gregory to Charles Mackie, 22 February 1915, 2017.38.3545, Mackie Papers, CM.

[89] *Repeal* , November 1913, p.8.

[90] *MW*, 3 March 1915, p.8.

[91] Between 1902—1918, Page was either secretary or president of the Canterbury Women's Institute in most years, and she was also secretary of the National Council of Women 1905–06.

involved, 'as some of the finest lads I knew began to be thrown into the common jails for following the dictates of their conscience.'[92] Another NPC activist, Sarah Bradley, and her daughter Ida, founder of the Children's Peace Society, were also regular Quaker attenders. Page and Ada Wells, the latter a forthright anti-militarist, who later became Christchurch's first female councillor, were asked by the NPC to write the leaflet *To the Women of New Zealand: A Plea For the Repeal of the Defence Act*.[93] They were prominent in the public agitation that pressured the government into abolishing the compulsory junior cadet system in schools, returning it to a voluntary system, in the Defence Amendment Act of November 1912. This Act included a concession to religious objectors; they could appeal for exemption to the magistrate, who would decide on the validity of their appeal. In other words, it no longer depended on the doctrines of your church but on your ability to convince the magistrate of the genuineness of your conscience. Local magistrates, however, were clearly unsure how to interpret the Act. Two Christadelphians had been exempted in Auckland in August 1911, whereas Peter Thompson had been imprisoned.[94] A Dannevirke magistrate refused another request for exemption in November 1913, arguing that Christadelphian doctrine did not condemn compulsory military training.[95] This was in many ways a precursor to how British tribunals proceeded during the war.

Quakers in London hailed the Amended Act as an 'implicit confession of the failure of previous methods of dealing with those who refused to serve'.[96] But in truth, apart from the slight liberalisation in favour of religious objectors, the Act was designed to place greater pressure on defaulters. Defaulters could be deprived of their civil rights for 10 years; fines could be deducted from wages; young men convicted would be ineligible for free school places or scholarships; and imprisonment in civil gaols was replaced with military detention. Following the passing of the Act, the Authorities stepped up their persecution. Opponents of the Act successfully used public street meetings as a forum for their views. In early 1913, Christchurch City Council invoked by-laws relating to the obstruction of traffic to stop these, yet other meetings, for example the Salvation Army, were allowed to proceed without interference. Such blatant bias drew even more support from the wider community for a PRU-inspired 'free speech campaign', in the midst of which John Percy Fletcher arrived in Christchurch on 3 July.

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[92] Lovell-Smith, M., 'Sarah Saunders Page: A courageous advocate for peace', *Voices Against War*, https://voicesagainstwar.nz/exhibits/show/women-peacemakers/sarah-saunders-page--a-courage, 2016 (accessed: 15/04/2024).

[93] Page, S., and Wells, A., *To the Women of New Zealand: a plea for the repeal of the Defence Act*, Christchurch, National Peace Council, Item 493, Mackie Papers Pamphlets, CM.

[94] *AS*, 14 August 1911, p.6.

[95] *Oamaru Mail*, 7 November 1913, p.2.

[96] *A Blot on the Empire: Conscription in New Zealand*, London: Society of Friends Peace Committee, 1913, p.8.

John Percy Fletcher

Fletcher, born on 7 February 1884 at Much Hadham in Hertfordshire, left school at 14 and worked as a solicitor's then a stockbroker's clerk, before being awarded a scholarship to Ruskin College, Oxford, in 1908. After a year there he embarked upon an almost Orwellian tramp around Britain, sleeping rough, in order to study social conditions in the country. He then decided to work his way around the world, studying social and labour conditions, arriving in Australia late in 1911. A man of enormous drive and conviction, he was immediately caught up in the anti-militarist struggle there and was instrumental, with two other Quakers, in establishing the Australian Freedom League in April 1912. After some weeks of indefatigable and successful organising in Australia, Fletcher came over to New Zealand to attend the Religious Society of Friends' Annual Meeting. His report on the struggle in Australia, and the obvious parallels with events in New Zealand, clearly made an impression on the New Zealand Quakers, as did his unwavering conviction that there should be no accommodation of any sort with the Defence Acts in either country. He was sent to assist the campaign in New Zealand in 1913 with the authority of the London Yearly Meeting.[97] (Fletcher is pictured in **Figure 1**, above.)

David Grant has suggested that, of all the groups and individuals involved in the struggle, 'Perhaps the most outspoken figure was John Fletcher ... who took the fight to the streets in an unrelenting campaign, during which he was arrested, fined and imprisoned.'[98] Within a month of his arrival Fletcher had been elected President of the AML, and arrested for posting handbills with Reg Williams of the PRU. He was fined 20 shillings plus costs, refused to pay, and was imprisoned for 7 days. He wanted, he said, 'to share the lot of the boys who have been imprisoned', and by doing so he had 'been brought into fuller fellowship with those who suffer.'[99] Installed in the office shared by the NPC and the AML, he launched and edited a new *Monthly Circular* in October 1913. The *Lyttelton Times* of 11 October reported that he had been arrested again, this time for obstruction whilst speaking in Sydenham, and fined 10 shillings.[100] Once more he was imprisoned.

As prosecutions continued to rise the government, in what Ryan Bodman has called 'an implicit admission of defeat, thinly disguised as a benevolent concession',[101] now

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[97] For biographical details of Fletcher see *Friend*, 5 January 1962, pp.7–9; *Peace News* 12 May 1950, p.5.

[98] Grant, 'Where Were the Peacemongers?', p.221.

[99] J.P. Fletcher to Society of Friends' Joint Committee on Australasian Compulsory Military Training, 14 August 1913, LSF, YM/MfS/ANZC.

[100] *LT*, 11 October 1913, p.7.

[101] Bodman, 'Don't be a Conscript', p.25.

considered extending the terms of exemption beyond the religious to all those who claimed exemption on 'conscientious grounds', as long as they agreed to do alternative and equivalent service. The latter re-opened divisions within the Society of Friends, which now sent another deputation to meet the Defence Minister and the Prime Minister. Alexander and Fletcher were part of this deputation, which presented a memorial from the Religious Society of Friends in London pleading for freedom of conscience. Prime Minister Massey, somewhat ironically in the light of his unquestioning allegiance to the British government and its military planning, challenged the right of citizens from another country to interfere in the affairs of New Zealand, and reiterated the government's determination to 'administer the law of the country in regard to compulsory military training in strict compliance with its spirit.'[102] The Minister of Defence, Sir James Allen, however, expressed some sympathy with the conscientious objectors but told the deputation that 'it was not right that any young fellow should be let off service without making an equivalent sacrifice',[103] and significantly he turned to the Religious Society of Friends to help him define suitable alternative service. This again was a pre-cursor to events in the United Kingdom.

Alexander, shortly before he departed New Zealand for England, wrote to the Minister of Defence, although stressing that he did so in a personal capacity. He thought that as long as the state was demanding some service from all young men then it was probable that the vast majority of conscientious objectors would accept a reasonable alternative service, for example road building and repair.[104] Fletcher, however, did not agree. Responding to Alexander, he castigated him for writing to the Minister, and said that the attempt 'to obtain a partial solution of the problem by means of the Conscience Clause has been a continued source of embarrassment to the Peace Workers in Christchurch. We cannot meet the Defence Authorities half-way ... we cannot meet them anyway. There must be clear, frank hostility between us.'[105] Fletcher was very worried that the New Zealand Friends might follow Alexander when they met for their General meeting in Auckland. If they do, he said, 'it will be the end of the Friends' influence in the Peace and anti-militarist work in this country.'[106] Both the NPC and the PRU declared their total opposition to alternative service, the overwhelming feeling being that to accept alternative service was to accept the principle of conscription. Fletcher need not have worried; a minute of the Friends' Annual Meeting recorded that they strongly opposed

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[102] *LT*, 20 November 1913, p.7.

[103] *NZH*, 20 December 1913, p.11.

[104] W.H.F. Alexander to Sir James Allen, 21 January 1914, 2017.38.2775Mackie Papers, CM.

[105] J. P. Fletcher to W. H. F. Alexander 14 February 1914, 2017.38.1152, Mackie Papers, CM.

[106] Fletcher to Alexander, 12 February 1914, 2017.38.1151, Mackie Papers, CM.

alternative service, declaring that 'it is but part of the Defence Act, which we cannot countenance in any way.'[107] In the event, local authorities in New Zealand, when asked what work they could provide, refused to co-operate and the scheme never got off the ground.

Another English Quaker, Margaret Lloyd (pictured in **Figure 1**, above), arrived in New Zealand early in 1914, being welcomed by the Canterbury Women's Institute at their meeting on 11 March. According to the *Lyttelton Times* she was a 'British suffragist' and the 'daughter of General Lloyd, of the Imperial Army.'[108] Lloyd had been a social worker in London and was also involved in the Home Industries movement in Somerset, a movement which aimed to train young women in traditional skills such as spinning and weaving to help augment family income. She quickly became active in the peace movement, attending the Christchurch court hearings every week, and Mackie reported that 'she is doing good work and will be a great assistance to the cause here.'[109] Lloyd represented the Society of Friends as part of a large deputation of anti-militarists who met Prime Minister Massey in June 1914. She protested at the Navy League being allowed to give lectures in schools, expressed the hope that the government would not allow itself to be in thrall to 'the machinations of certain large firms', and urged the government to set up a Department of Peace as an example to other countries. Massey was impervious to the demands of the delegation: 'The present government is going to stand or fall by the Defence Act', he said, 'and it will not go back on it to the slightest degree.'[110]

On the verge of victory?

However, the number of prosecutions continued to rise, with 400 in Canterbury alone in February 1914. In Christchurch, some 75 per cent of those who should have turned up for drill were failing to do so. During the year ending April 1914, 234 lads had been sentenced to military detention.[111] Alfred Brown felt that 'the New Zealand Act in its present form is doomed',[112] whilst Alexander wrote later in the year of 'the coming victory in New Zealand.'[113] An editorial in *the Manawatu Evening Standard* expressed 'very serious doubts ... as to the wisdom of the expensive and disorganising system.' It

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[107] *Friend*, 17 July 1914, p.528.

[108] *LT*, 16 March 1914 p.5 and 23 July 1914, p.6.

[109] Mackie to Herbert Corder, 26 August 1914, 2017.38.3282, Mackie Papers, CM.

[110] *Press*, 8 June 1914, p.10.

[111] See Lovell-Smith, M., *I Don't Believe in Murder: Standing Up For Peace in World War 1 Canterbury*, Christchurch, Canterbury University Press, 2023, pp.105–07.

[112] Alfred Brown to Charles Mackie, 22 July 1913, 2017.38.3333, Mackie Papers, CM.

[113] W.H.F. Alexander to Charles Mackie, 24 October 1913, 2017.38.2760, Mackie Papers, CM.

said that there were signs 'of revulsion of public opinion in favour of the old volunteer system.'[114] Historians too have suggested that the scheme was on the verge of collapse at this time. Bodman concludes that 'The abolition of the compulsory clauses of the act was becoming a very real possibility by mid-1914',[115] Elsie Locke that 'the whole structure of compulsory military training was rapidly becoming a shambles.'[116] Loveridge, however, points out that outside Canterbury, consent was more common than dissent and hardly represented 'a crisis of the status quo.'[117] Even within Canterbury, the anti-militarists often found it difficult to gain a hearing. In August 1913, Mackie, Fletcher and others attempted to hold a meeting in the country town of Ashburton, but a hostile and well-prepared audience drowned them out with a cacophony of horns, whistles, shouting and singing. Another attempt later that year was described as 'an even worse failure than before ... short of actual violence being perpetrated on them, a worse reception than the evening's could not well be imagined.'[118] Newspaper editorials referred to the anti-militarists as shirkers and suggested that the rest of New Zealand viewed Christchurch anti-militarists as eccentrics. The *Hawera and Normanby Star* suggested that 'Extreme anti-militarists are again making a laughing- stock of Christchurch, though they are in the merest minority ... Christchurch's eccentrics ... beat all other eccentrics in the Dominion for the persistency and oddness of their exhibitions.'[119] Nor did the anti-militarists have things their own way in Christchurch, several meetings having to be abandoned due to hostile crowds.[120]

We may never know which view has more credence, as the onset of the First World War changed everything.

The First World War

Jingoistic passions, war fever, the pressure to conform, all combined to threaten the anti-militarist movement. As elsewhere in the world, young men in their thousands rushed to enlist. Although compulsory military training under the Defence Act continued, imprisonment was suspended but prosecutions and fines continued. Societal pressures were such that the PRU quickly dissolved. The AML did not meet after November 1914. The NPC abandoned public meetings and retreated into study circles, organised by Margaret Lloyd, 'as it was apparent that the community had been infected

[114] *Manawatu Evening Standard*, 4 May 1914, p.4.
[115] Bodman, 'Don't Be a Conscript', p.30.
[116] Locke, *Peace People*, p.47.
[117] Loveridge, *Calls to Arms*, p.116.
[118] *AS*, 10 October 1913, p.8
[119] *Hawera and Normanby Star*, 17 June 1913, p.4.
[120] See for example Fletcher to Egerton Gill, 9 June 1914, 2017.38.1963, Mackie Papers, CM.

with the war fever, it being far from the wish of the Council to accentuate the excitement already at high pitch.'[121] But as the war progressed the Peace movement re-asserted itself. Elizabeth Rutter remained active in the work of the NPC, and in 1915 her home in Wellington was raided by the police, who seized her private correspondence and the minute books of the Wellington Religious Society of Friends. She returned to England early in 1916. Egerton Gill was arrested in October 1915 and fined £50 for distributing leaflets likely to prejudice recruiting. The introduction of conscription in New Zealand in August 1916 saw the Quakers once more assert their conscientious objection to war and to compulsion, with 13 Quakers, including Gill, imprisoned for refusing to serve. Four are recorded as serving in the New Zealand Medical Corps, whilst others travelled overseas to avoid conscription, three at least joining the British Red Cross Ambulance Unit in Italy. Charles Mackie, thoroughly disillusioned with the pro-war attitude of the Baptist church, resigned from the Linwood Baptist Church in 1917 and thereafter became a regular Quaker attender. The support of the Religious Society of Friends for the anti-militarist campaign, and the moral authority they lent to the cause, had been of great solace to him.

John Percy Fletcher left New Zealand in August 1914, and immediately threw himself into the anti-war movement in Australia. He urged the Religious Society of Friends to openly oppose the war. 'If this is treason and sedition', he said, 'then I am content to be a traitor.'[122] He returned to England just in time for the first National Convention of the No-Conscription Fellowship (NCF) and was immediately elected to the National Committee. He was welcomed as 'an already seasoned campaigner', whose 'first-hand knowledge of what was, in effect, conscription "down under", made him a most valuable asset.'[123] In the summer of 1916, he was one of the NCF members arrested and tried under the Defence of The Realm Act for the publication of the pamphlet *Repeal the Act.* Refusing to pay his fine, he served two months in Pentonville Prison. Arrested again in July 1917, Fletcher was tried as an absentee, and handed over to the military. At his court martial in Wallsend on 17 August, he was sentenced to two years imprisonment with hard labour. The Acting General Secretary of the NCF, writing in 1919, said that he had been 'a great inspiration to all of us.'[124] That sentiment had been echoed by those in New Zealand. At their AGM in August 1914, the AML recorded that 'We feel greatly indebted and wish to convey our gratitude to him for his labours in the cause of peace

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121 Mackie, *Report of the Work of the National Peace Council*, p.11.

122 Fletcher to Mackie, 14 September 1914, 2017.38.2652, Mackie Papers, CM.

123 *Peace News*, 12 May 1950, p.5.

124 E. E. Hunter to Charles Mackie, 7 March 1919, 2017.38.5714, Mackie Papers, CM.

... We shall ever regard him as our elder and teacher.'[125] A highly-principled and single-minded man, he was at the forefront of a group of British Quakers who came to New Zealand to assist in the campaign against compulsory military training.

Conclusion

The wider implications of the introduction of compulsory military training in Australasia were apparent to objectors from the outset, and particularly to the Quakers. Their opposition to war was combined with the defence of civil liberty and religious freedom. The endeavours of British Quakers in New Zealand, and funding from the Religious Society of Friends in Great Britain, helped to establish what became a very effective movement against the Defence Act, achieving some success when the Act was amended in 1912 to include a conscience clause, and arguably on the verge of total success before the outbreak of the First World War. They helped to pioneer 'the kind of anti-militarist and libertarian protest that emerged in the mother country during World War in such organisations as the largely non-Quaker-No-Conscription Fellowship.'[126] Moreover, they galvanised local Quakerism and brought Friends together in a way that had not been seen before. The Annual Conferences, initiated by visiting British Quakers in 1909, played a key role in this. The *Christian World* wrote that New Zealand Quakers, 'though few in number, were attracting attention to a degree far beyond their numerical strength by their vigorous resistance to the ... Defence Act.'[127] Their experiences pre-war helped New Zealand Quakers during the war, where 'their ability to form a united stand helped continue the growth and development of a corporate identity ... and accelerated a sense of independence from England.'[128]

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[125] *Christchurch Anti-Militarist League Minute Book*, 11 August 1914.

[126] Brock, *The Quaker Peace Testimony*, p.289.

[127] Quoted in West and Fawell, *The Story of New Zealand Quakerism*, p.69.

[128] Adams, 'The Growth and Development of the Society of Friends in New Zealand', p.208.

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Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.