

GREAT DEBATES: ARGUMENTS AGAINST CONSCRIPTION

CHARACTER PROFILE

4

Ms Vida **Goldstein**



they'll
take
DAD,
next ”

VOTE
 NO

Great Debates: Conscription

© Commonwealth of Australia 2015

This work is copyright.

Permission is given by the Commonwealth for this publication to be copied royalty free within Australia solely for educational purposes. Apart from any use as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced for commercial purposes.

To the best of DVA's knowledge, copyright permission has been obtained for any non-Commonwealth material used in this book and for the use of such material for education purposes. The Commonwealth shall not be responsible for any actions resulting from any errors or omissions contained in this book. If you believe there has been an error or omission in any of the material, please contact DVA at education@dva.gov.au.

For enquiries about reproduction or other uses of this publication, contact:

Department of Veterans' Affairs
Commemorations Branch
GPO Box 9998
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Tel: (02) 6289 1111

Website: www.anzacportal.dva.gov.au

Email: education@dva.gov.au

P03075

Published by the Department of Veterans' Affairs
Designed by Fivefold Creative
January 2016



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Source Analysis Worksheet

Source	What is the source? Who created it?	What information does the source provide?	What argument does this provide your character?	What questions are you left asking?

Biography

Vida **Goldstein**



“For the first time, in history, the people of a whole nation are being asked whether they shall declare their allegiance to the force of Might or the force of Right.”

Miles Franklin (left) and Vida Goldstein (right),
State Library of Victoria, accessed 3 September 2015,
<http://ergo.slv.vic.gov.au/image/miles-franklin-vida-goldstein>

It is November 1917. Vida Goldstein is a well-known speaker, writer, and political activist, who is heavily involved in the women’s **suffrage** movement. She was one of four women who were the first to stand for election in a national parliament in the British Empire. She is a pacifist and has argued against the war since its beginning. In 1915, she had co-founded the Women’s Peace Army; an association that rallies women who oppose the war.

In 1917, Prime Minister Billy Hughes determined it necessary to introduce a referendum on **conscription**. Falling enlistments and rising casualties, particularly from the fighting on the **Western Front**, have led to a shortage of reinforcements for the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). Hughes has announced a **referendum** on the issue for 20 December. Australians will vote on whether conscripts should be sent to fight overseas.

This is not the first time Hughes has tried to introduce conscription. On 28 October 1916, the first referendum on conscription was held. It was defeated: 49% voted for the proposal, 51% were against. Only a small majority of soldiers serving in the AIF voted in favour of compulsory overseas service.

The Women’s Peace Army (WPA), which has the motto ‘We war against war’, has participated in the campaigns against conscription in the lead-up to both referendums. Their public meetings are popular and at times controversial, often stirring heated debate. The WPA demonstrates publicly for peace, backs parliamentary candidates who are pro-peace, and helps people who have suffered because of the war.

Source 1.1



AWM RC00336

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/RC00336/>

Source 1.2

'WOMEN of AUSTRALIA! On October 28 we shall have laid upon us the greatest responsibility and the greatest privilege that could be placed upon the women of any country.

For the first time, in history, the people of a whole nation are being asked whether they shall declare their allegiance to the force of Might or the force of Right.'

Manifesto, Australian Women's Peace Army/ Vida Goldstein, State Library of Victoria, accessed 08 September 2015,

<http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/162336>.

Source 1.3

'In no circumstances would I agree to send men out of this country to fight against their will. If the day ever comes when men will not fight when their country is at deathgrips, it will be because the country is rotten to the core, and not worth fighting for. If the enemy comes here it will not be a question of conscription at all, for every one, young and old, must take what comes to his hand, and die, if need be, in the attempt to defend the country.'

William Morris Hughes, Speech to the House of Representatives, 16 July 1915. Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates, [accessed 07 September 2015]

http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/genpdf/hansard80/hansardr80/1915-07-16/0141/hansard_frag.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf

Source 1.4

The Mothers

*You who breasted your babies,
what have you to say?
You who suffered the birth-pangs
shall you lightly slay?
You who were taught to believe
in life as a sacred thing—
Oh, what shall be your answer
when you are answering?*

*Oh, you who loved the toddlers—
you who shaped their dreams.
What shall be the answer
when every jingo screams?
Shall you be worse than the tiger,
in the jungle curled,
Shielding its suckling offspring
against the warring world?*

*Mothers of All Australia—
mothers of him and me,
What, when the answers given—
what shall the answer be?—
A primitive howl of fury
worse than that of the wild?
Shall the lioness love her cub
more than you can love your child?*

*Mothers, we wait your answer—
you of the travail-breed;
You who suffer in silence,
you who have paid indeed!
The life that you brought to being—
the life that was half your own—
How will you treat it?—answer
before the dice are thrown!*

Written by R. J. Conroy, and drawn by Claude Wainwright—2 London Place Sydney

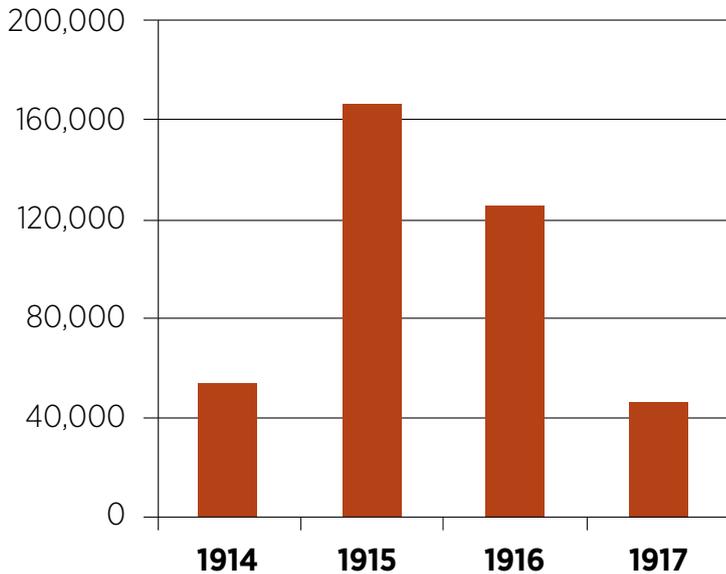
**VOTE EARLY AND
Vote NO**

Authorised by P. C. Evans, Macdonell House, Sydney, on behalf of
No-Conscription Council Campaign Committee.
The Worker Print, St. Andrew's Place, Sydney. [Over]

AWM RC00335
<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/RC00335/>

Source 1.5

Enlistments by year*



In 1917 Britain sought a sixth division for active service. In order to meet this request, Australia needed 7,000 volunteers per month. However, the number of volunteers in 1917 was failing to meet this target.

Based on *Enlistment statistics, First World War*, Australian War Memorial, accessed 3 September 2015

* Approximate only

<https://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/enlistment/ww1/#year>.

Source 1.6

“We are delighted to announce that Miss Goldstein has accepted the invitation of the W.P.A., and will be a candidate for the Senate. There is no one in public life in Australia who has better right to be in the Senate than Miss Goldstein. From the inception of her public career, she has never wavered from principle; she has fought in season and out of season for justice for women, for children, for the people; she was the first person in public life in this state who had the moral courage to declare that war could not possibly settle any moral principle, and that the negotiation which would have to be invoked to end the war should have been invoked to try and prevent it. She and her associates made possible and led the fight against conscription. She is a non-party politician, and is therefore more entitled than anyone else to a seat in the House that was constituted as a non-party House – the Senate.”

Miss Vida Goldstein. (1917, March 15). *Woman Voter* (Melbourne, Vic.: 1911 - 1919), p. 3. Retrieved September 3, 2015, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article171815264>.

Glossary of terms

conscription	A policy that compels citizens of a nation into military service.
referendum	A public vote called by the government to approve a change to the Australian Constitution. The 1916 and 1917 referenda were in fact plebiscites. A plebiscite, also known as an advisory referendum, is used to decide a national question that does not affect the Constitution. It can be used to test whether the government has sufficient support from the people to go ahead with a proposed action.
suffrage	The right or privilege of voting.
Western Front	A series of trenches running from the Belgian coast to the Swiss border, separating the Allied and Central Powers in the First World War.
