Spectacle and Political Gimmicks: The Women's Crusade for Liberty, 1947–1949

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Abstract

The Australian Women's Movement Against Socialisation (AWMAS) was founded in 1947 to campaign against the socialisation of Australia. Having observed post-war power play between communist East and capitalist West, the federal government's bank nationalisation policy and union-backed coal strikes, Millicent Preston Stanley Vaughan (1883–1955), a lifelong anti-socialist feminist, perceived the need for a massive movement of women to prevent the Labor Government's introduction of socialism by stealth. Conceiving this movement as a women's crusade to free the nation from the socialist infidels, she constructed the campaign as a three-act drama, cast influential women in key roles, set scenes in significant venues, and employed spectacular theatrical gimmickry. This article argues that despite criticisms from historians such as Warwick Eather and Drew Cottle that the AWMAS campaign was 'aggressive' and 'hysterical', it is more useful to understand it in terms of sociologist Ari Adut's explanation of the public sphere as a space in which the central event is 'spectacle' and historian Sean Scalmer's notion of 'political gimmick'. Viewed through this lens, the AWMAS campaign was successful in giving conservative women agency and opportunities to influence the national political agenda.

In 1947 lifelong anti-socialist feminist warrior Millicent Preston Stanley Vaughan (1883–1955) established the Australian Women's Movement Against Socialisation (AWMAS) to campaign against the socialisation of Australia.¹ The mission of this non-party and non-sectarian activist

1 Born Millicent Fanny Stanley in 1883, she inserted her mother's maiden name into her surname after her alcoholic father's desertion of the family, and added her husband's surname after her marriage to Crawford Vaughan in 1932. In this paper I will use her given name, Millicent, for ease of reference.

organisation was a 'Crusade for Liberty': to free the nation from the tentacles of socialism that had infiltrated unions and the Labor Party. This article examines the strategies employed by the AWMAS 'Crusade for Liberty' (1947–49) and the directorial role Millicent played in that campaign.

Australian women's public campaigns have a long history although their forms and emphases have changed over time. Historian Clare Wright notes that on the nineteenth-century Australian goldfields, theatre played a significant role in enabling women to participate in a 'forum for discussion' of social issues.² Later nineteenth-century suffragists such as Margaret Windeyer and Louisa Macdonald adopted American May Wright Sewall's 'Council Idea', founding organisations that used delegations and deputations as strategies to campaign for reform.³ Influenced by the New Theatre League's declaration that 'art is a weapon in the people's struggle', early twentieth-century feminists such as Betty Roland and Ruby Rich penned agitprop dramas that were produced in the 'clusters of amateur "little theatres"'.⁴ Conservative women, who had little appetite for militant struggle, amalgamated their state National Councils of Women in 1931 to form the National Council of Women of Australia (NCWA) with the aim of providing 'information, education and co-operation' rather than engaging in 'activism, agitation and opposition'.⁵ Rose Scott, one of the founders of the NCW of New South Wales (NSW), who was renowned for her political salons, decried militant activism as 'the expression of a bellicose spirit inimical to the interests of women and social reform'.⁶

Nevertheless, militancy was not absent from Australian women's activism. In 1914, at a University of Sydney rally addressed by English suffragette Adela Pankhurst, women armed themselves with 'hockey sticks', 'sallied forth' and 'roundly belted' the young men objecting to their presence on campus.⁷ Moreover, Australian suffragists such as Vida Goldstein travelled

2 Clare Wright, *The Forgotten Rebels of Eureka* (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2013), 250, 252.

3 Marian Quartly and Judith Smart, *Respectable Radicals: A History of the National Council of Women of Australia 1896–2006* (Victoria: Monash University Publishing, 2015), 7.

4 Katherine Brisbane, *Entertaining Australia: The Performing Arts in Cultural History* (Sydney: Currency Press, 1991), 233; Wendy Michaels, 'Tomorrow and Tomorrow: Ruby Rich's Didactic Theatre Script *Tomorrow: Every Woman's Peace Play*', in *The National Estate – Cultural Heritage*, ed. Gretchen Poiner (Canberra: ISAA Conference Proceedings 2009), 85; Michelle Arrow, *Upstaged: Australian Women Dramatists in the Limelight at Last* (Sydney: Currency Press, 2002), 4.

5 Quartly and Smart, *Respectable Radicals*, 18.

6 Judith A. Allen, *Rose Scott: Vision and Revision in Feminism* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994), 1.

7 Tony Cunneen, 'One of the "Laws Women Need"', *Bar News* (2010–2011): 102–03, www.austlii.edu.au/au/journals/NSWBarAssocNews/2010/73.pdf.

to England in 1911 to campaign with the militant Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU).⁸ Australian actress Muriel Matters, frustrated with the 'masculine principle' that drove life, joined the Women's Freedom League and in 1908 chained herself to the grille in the Ladies' Gallery of the House of Commons and in 1909 dropped 'Votes for Women' leaflets across London from a Zeppelin.⁹

While the campaigns of conservative Australian feminists attracted press coverage at the time, historians have tended to gloss over them or dismiss their concerns as 'maternalist feminism', which did not warrant the label 'feminist' because of their socially conservative 'reform philosophy'.¹⁰ As historian Marilyn Lake notes, even an 'uncompromising equal rights feminist' such as Linda Littlejohn was 'effectively written out of history'. Lake's explanation for their invisibility in the historiography—'Women's Liberationists' viewed them as 'an embarrassing legacy to be overcome, rather than a tradition with which to connect'—is regrettably convincing and points to the complex intersections of gender, ideology and class.¹¹

More recent research has focused on some of the early activists, their organisations and their campaigns, although Millicent and her campaigns, particularly her AWMAS crusade, have attracted little critical attention. The *Dictionary of Sydney*, overlooking her political campaigns, states she 'fought for better maternal health, government family payments and maternal custody rights', thereby reinforcing a maternalist feminist image. The NSW Parliament website notes she was 'campaign director of Australian Women's Movement against Socialisation 1947–1953' without any elaboration of the purpose of that organisation or the nature of its activism.¹² Heather Radi dismisses Millicent's anti-socialist activism with the problematic statement that she 'fought her last political campaign in the Australian Women's Movement against Socialization'. Gail Griffiths criticises her use of the Feminist Club 'as a bastion against communism',

8 Janice N. Brownfoot, 'Goldstein, Vida Jane (1869–1949)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/goldstein-vida-jane-6418/text10975.

9 Robert Wainwright, *Miss Muriel Matters* (Sydney: HarperCollins, 2017), 354.

10 Carol Bacchi, 'Evolution, Eugenics and Women: the Impact of Scientific Theories on Attitudes towards Women, 1870–1920', in *Women, Class and History: Feminist Perspectives on Australia 1788–1978*, ed. Elizabeth Windschuttle (Sydney: Fontana/Collins, 1980), 134.

11 Marilyn Lake, *Getting Equal: The History of Australian Feminism* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1999), 1–2, 7.

12 'Miss Millicent Preston-Stanley (1883–1955)', *Parliament of New South Wales*, www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/members/Pages/member-details.aspx?pk=1394; 'Preston Stanley, Millicent', *Dictionary of Sydney*, dictionaryofsydney.org/person/preston_stanley_millicent.

while Marian Sawyer and Marian Simms suggest Millicent was ‘out of favour with some in her own party and independent feminists’.¹³ Although Cathy Jenkins’s main focus is on the press reception of Millicent’s parliamentary term, she does acknowledge ‘her long involvement in state and national issues’ and her ‘strong interest in world politics and international relations’. Without specifying Millicent’s long-standing anti-socialism, she adds (incorrectly) that after the war ‘Millicent became involved in a conflict of a different kind—this time against socialisation’.¹⁴ Warwick Eather positions the AWMAS campaign as an attempt to make the Liberal Party more attentive to their political needs while dismissing it as an ‘extreme right wing organisation’ that enrolled ‘political agitator[s]’ with ‘a history of anti-communist, anti-union and anti-ALP [Australian Labor Party] activity’.¹⁵ Eather and Drew Cottle expand on the notion of political agitation, positioning the AWMAS in a puppet-like relationship with capital’s war against labour, financed by Sydney banks. Moreover, they assert the AWMAS employed ‘hysterical tactics’ in their ‘aggressive public rallies’—misogynistic comments that echo nineteenth-century notions of women and hysteria, the public/private dichotomy, and the separate sexual spheres ideology.¹⁶

This paper throws new light on the AWMAS crusade for liberty and Millicent’s directorial role by drawing on concepts articulated by political historians Chris Wallace and Sean Scalmer, political scientist Hannah Arendt, ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle and sociologist Ari Adut. Adut contends that ‘the public sphere is not the realm of civic dialogue’; it is not the place for rational political discourse, where logical arguments can be proposed, discussed and debated.¹⁷ Rather, it is a space for featuring emotionally charged positions that engage audiences. However, it is not

13 Heather Radi, ‘Preston Stanley, Millicent Fanny (1883–1955)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/preston-stanley-millicent-fanny-8107/text14153; ‘The Feminist Club of NSW 1914–1970: A History of Feminist Politics in Decline’, *Hecate*, 14, no. 1 (1988): 63; Marian Sawyer and Marian Simms, *A Woman’s Place: Women and Politics in Australia* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1984), 102.

14 Cathy Jenkins, *No Ordinary Lives: Pioneering Women in Australian Politics* (Victoria: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2008), 53–54.

15 Warwick Eather, ‘The Liberal Party of Australia and the Australian Women’s Movement Against Socialisation 1947–54’, *Australian Journal of Politics & History*, 44, no. 2 (1998): 191–207; Warwick Eather, ‘“Every Woman! This is Your Business”: The Australian Women’s Movement Against Socialisation’, *Journal of Interdisciplinary Gender Studies*, 2, no. 1 (1997): 60–61.

16 Warwick Eather and Drew Cottle, ‘Capital’s Footsoldiers: The War against the Australian Labor Party during the 1940s’, *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 99, no. 1 (2013): 18–35.

17 Ari Adut, *Reign of Appearances: The Misery and Splendour of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), x–xii.

only stirring emotions that characterise activity in the public sphere. In Arendt's conceptualisation, the public space highlights the 'visibility of actors' and 'generates power' since it suggests the 'potential for collective action'.¹⁸ The AWMAS took advantage of their visibility in the masculine public spaces and worked to generate a sense of women's power in collective action in that space. Although Adut does not specifically engage with the notion of gendered space in his assertion that the 'main event' in the public sphere is 'spectacle', the gendering of space is relevant to the AWMAS use of spectacle.

Spectacle, one of Aristotle's elements of drama, relates to visual performance features such as sets, costumes and props.¹⁹ The traditionally masculine spaces of venues such as the Sydney Town Hall and Canberra's Albert Hall, which AWMAS appropriated for their events, provided sets that worked to highlight both the national significance of the campaign and women's exercise of power, which was further accentuated by costume and prop choices such as flag-bedecked pinafores and the camel saddled with string shopping bags, which encapsulated the campaign message that loyal women would be unbearably burdened by a socialist government. This transgressive tactic of inserting domestic women into traditionally masculine public realms ungendered the space and asserted the legitimacy of the women's political campaign.

In political campaigns, as Wallace points out, 'advertising isn't everything—but it's nearly everything' and must be 'directed at the right target'.²⁰ Although Wallace's focus is on contemporary political campaigns, her insight is useful in examining the AWMAS crusade that comprised an extended political advertisement crammed with gimmicks: tricks intended to attract attention. As Scalmer notes, such 'political gimmicks' are aimed at 'publicity, debate', and the ultimate goal of instigating 'political change'.²¹ Like Wallace, Scalmer is concerned with a later period of Australian history but his notion of gimmickry, with its ultimate goal of political change, is applicable to this examination of AWMAS's *raison d'être* and *modus operandi* and Millicent's role in that movement.

18 Xavier Marquez, 'Spaces of Appearance and Spaces of Surveillance', *Polity*, 44 (2012): 6–31.

19 Aristotle identified six elements of tragedy and comedy; plot, character, diction, thought, song, spectacle. See, for instance, Aristotle, *Poetics* (350 BCE), trans. S. H. Butcher, classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/poetics.1.1.html.

20 Chris Wallace, *How to Win an Election* (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2020), 92–93.

21 Sean Scalmer, *Dissent Events: Protest, the Media, and the Political Gimmick in Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2002), 176.

Prologue

Millicent did not come late to anti-socialism. At the age of 22, as a member of the Women's Liberal League (WLL), she heeded Charles Lee's advice to members in 1905 to put the threat of socialism 'in the forefront of their propaganda' and she supported the WLL motion that 'the duty of every patriotic and liberal minded woman [is] to assist in the fight against socialistic legislation'.²² Twenty years later, as the first woman member of the NSW parliament (1925–27), she vehemently opposed the Lang Labor Government's socialistic policies and decried the 'wild, unruly, demagogic, dangerous communist element' that was infiltrating unions.²³ After her parliamentary term, she joined the Sane Democracy League, established in 1920 'to combat Communism'. Millicent moved that the League form a women's branch to 'campaign in co-operation with the league's central executive', and as secretary of this newly established branch proclaimed the 'time is ripe for a widespread movement against the Communist menace'.²⁴ Millicent's opposition to socialism was reinforced in 1947 by her opposition to Prime Minister Chifley's bank nationalisation policy, which, she asserted, would be 'the key to a totalitarian organisation of society'.²⁵ Millicent was not alone in this view, the newly established AWMAS attracted many like-minded women prepared to protect the nation from socialism.

Militant, radical activism was not Millicent's style. She preferred 'deputations, agitations, intimidations, [and] organisations', although she did expand these into spectacular gimmickry.²⁶ During the 1917 Great Strike, as a co-director of the Women's Loyal Service Bureau, Millicent publicly challenged women to collaborate in a 'magnificent expression of the loyal womanhood of the state'.²⁷ As president of the Feminist Club, she lobbied for improved maternity services, appropriating the

22 'Mr. C. A. Lee on Socialism', *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 4 March 1905, 5; 'Women in Politics', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 May 1905, 7.

23 *New South Wales Parliamentary Debates* (hereafter NSWPD), 26 August 1925, 381.

24 'Sane Democracy', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 November 1930, 7; 'Aust. v Communism', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 December 1930, 6.

25 Millicent Preston Stanley Vaughan, 'Banking and Politics', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 September 1947, 2.

26 'Equal Rights for Mothers', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 May 1934, 12.

27 Wendy Michaels, "'Blackleggers' and 'Scabs' or 'Loyal Women': The Women's Loyal Service Bureau, Sydney 1917", paper presented at 'The First World War: Local, Global and Imperial Perspectives Conference, Centre for the History of Violence, University of Newcastle, 26–27 March 2015; 'Women's Loyal Service Bureau', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 September 1917, 14.

attention-grabbing title 'Horses Rights for Women' from a nineteenth-century American campaign. For her Infant Guardianship battle she drew directly on theatrical spectacle.²⁸ After more than a decade of lobbying for legislative reform, in 1932 she organised a Vice Regal opening night for the Criterion Theatre production of her political play *Whose Child*, at which the Minister for Justice announced the Infant Guardianship legislation would be introduced.²⁹ An expert networker and accomplished orator with a commanding presence and an acute sense of the dramatic, Millicent was undaunted by public performance and comfortable in directorial roles.

Her AWMAS mission was propped up by prevailing post-war anxieties about the power play between communist East and capitalist West. After George Orwell's term 'Cold War', which encapsulated these anxieties, appeared in former British prime minister Winston Churchill's 'Iron Curtain' speech, it entered common parlance.³⁰ Despite Australia's geographical isolation from the northern hemisphere Cold War front, the Australian press echoed the warnings with capitalist newspapers reporting on the danger of the 'spreading dictatorship of the hammer and sickle' and communist publications declaring that this was nothing more than 'war hysteria'.³¹

Although Labor Prime Minister Ben Chifley, an 'ardent internationalist', described communism in a speech to parliament as another 'brand of Fascism' and Russia as a 'dictatorship in which people have no rights', he became tarred with the 'Red' brush.³² With some Labor unions expressing 'blind admiration for the Soviet Union and its leadership', the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) infiltrated unions, and a wave of union-initiated strikes contributed to the optics that the Labor Government was allowing 'industrial disputation to foster revolution', an impression

28 Diana Wyndham, 'Striving for National Fitness: Eugenics in Australia 1910s to 1930s' (PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 1996), 196; *NSWPD*, 20 October 1925, 1652; 'Miss Stanley's Plea', *Daily Advertiser*, 21 October 1925, 3.

29 Wendy Michaels, 'The Final Factor: What Political Action Failed to Do', *Lilith: A Feminist History Journal*, no. 19 (2013): 18–31.

30 George Orwell, 'You and the Atomic Bomb', *The Orwell Foundation*, orwell.ru/library/articles/ABomb/english/e_abomb; Winston Churchill, 'The Sinews of Peace ("Iron Curtain Speech")', *Chartwell Trust*, winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1946-1963-elder-statesman/the-sinews-of-peace/.

31 'Cold War', *Advertiser*, 21 January 1948, 2; 'Cold War', *Tribune*, 4 November 1948, 1.

32 Julie Soares, *JB Chifley: An Ardent Internationalist* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2019); *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 2 September 1948, 67.

further aggravated by Chifley's bank nationalisation policy.³³ As Millicent viewed this political scene, she became convinced a massive movement of women was urgently needed to prevent the government's introduction of socialism by stealth.

Millicent was ready to lead this political movement. Adopting a deliberate stance of flippancy, she declared that, with nothing more than 'a pencil, a phone and a brain', she had invited women to join a gathering at the Sydney Town Hall.³⁴ More than 60 women with a history of engagement with anti-socialist activism immediately agreed to lend their names to the cause. They included prominent women in community organisations, the professions and the arts such as the president of the Country Women's Association, Grace Munro OBE; a life member of the Red Cross, Persia Porter; architect Florence Taylor OBE; engineer Dr Katie Louisa Ardill OBE; gynaecologist Dame Constance D'Arcy; opera singer Evelyn Gardiner; theatre director Doris Fitton; and visual artist Portia Geach. Their willingness to join Millicent's initiative reflected their concerns about Labor Government policies, the communist influence on unions, socialism's detrimental effects on Australia, and their confidence in Millicent's networking and campaigning skills.

Having secured her supporting cast, Millicent announced the campaign launch in an evocative newspaper advertisement addressed to the women of Sydney. 'Make this the BIGGEST WOMEN'S MEETING ever seen in SYDNEY', the advertisement commanded. 'Let CHIFLEY know what you think of this threat to your individual freedom.'³⁵ Millicent's choice of the nineteenth-century sandstone edifice of the Sydney Town Hall as the venue for the launch ensured it was perceived as a significant civic venture. She cast two federal Liberal parliamentarians, Dame Enid Lyons and Senator Annabel Rankin, in the main roles.³⁶ So persuasive were they in evoking the dire implications of bank nationalisation to the 3,000 women who attended that they resolved to combat this threat to democracy by establishing a women's organisation, initially called the United Women Citizen's Movement Against Socialisation, but renamed the Australian Women's Movement Against Socialisation.

33 Douglas Jordan, 'Conflict in the Unions: The Communist Party of Australia, Politics and the Trade Union Movement, 1945–1960' (PhD thesis, Victoria University, 2011), 2; Bradley Dowden, 'The Rise and Decline of Australian Unionism', *Labour History*, no. 100 (2011): 51–82.

34 Millicent Preston Stanley Papers (hereafter MPS Papers), MS 9062, Box 1, File 1, National Library of Australia (hereafter NLA), Canberra.

35 'Women of Sydney', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 September 1947, 7.

36 'Women Organise Protest Meeting', *Sun*, 25 September 1947, 10.

As director, Millicent's first concern was expanding the membership base. After a lifetime of involvement in political parties dominated by men, she determined AWMAS would not be aligned with any political party or religious organisation. With its anti-socialisation stance, it was not likely to appeal to Labor Party or Communist Party women, but it did attract women from other organisations, such as the Australian Women's Guild of Empire, the Feminist Club and the Sane Democracy League. Eleanor Glencross, chairman of directors of the Housewives' Association of NSW, announced its members would join because of the Movement's non-party position and its aim of arresting the spread of communism.³⁷ Perhaps unsurprisingly, AWMAS also drew some 'disillusioned' women away from the Liberal Party Women's Auxiliary, which caused tensions in that quarter.³⁸ Millicent was unapologetic, the rationale for this women-only organisation was to accord women the agency denied them in other male-dominated political organisations.

Act One

The campaign title, 'Crusade for Liberty', evoked the image of medieval 'holy wars' waged by the Latin Church to reclaim the Holy Land from Islamic rule. Using Australia's capital city, Canberra, as the setting further amplified this image. Just as citizens answered Pope Urban II's call to join the crusade in 1095, so did several hundred women answer the call to join this crusade, flocking to the Albert Hall in Commonwealth Avenue.³⁹ Albert Hall, which was opened in 1928 by Prime Minister Stanley Bruce, was named after London's Royal Albert Hall—itself named after Albert, Prince Consort to Queen Victoria. Built in the federal classical style with a *porte-cochère* at the front, it projected imperial visions that lent the rally gravitas. This was further amplified by the star cast of speakers that included, in addition to Millicent, Dame Enid Lyons, Senator Annabelle Rankin and Commandant of the Australian Women's Training Corps Lady Mabel Brookes. The audience was so moved by the women's oratory, they pledged to fight socialism, work for stronger ties with Britain and ensure the future of democracy.

37 'Nationalisation Plans', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 September 1947, 2.

38 Eather, 'The Liberal Party of Australia and the Australian Women's Movement Against Socialisation', 201.

39 Matthew Gabriele, 'How One Speech Started a Medieval Holy War', *Forbes*, www.forbes.com/sites/matthewgabriele/2018/10/29/one-speech-started-medieval-holy-war/.

The meeting resolved to send an urgent deputation to Prime Minister Ben Chifley to demand a referendum on the bank nationalisation policy. That deputation of women from the six Australian states, led by Lady Mabel Brookes, comprised Mrs Groom, Dame Enid Lyons, Mrs Eva Southcombe, Mrs Nelly Stewart and Millicent Preston Stanley. Arriving at Parliament House attired in dark-coloured suits and hats, costumes that projected middle-aged, middle-class respectability, they 'had tea and a courteous talk' with the prime minister.⁴⁰ Lady Brookes presented their case with 'formidable force' in what Enid Lyons described as an 'atmosphere charged with tension'.⁴¹ As one journalist reported, Chifley 'lit his pipe and told them bluntly that he could not agree to a referendum'.⁴² According to Millicent, Mr Chifley was 'very, very courteous but very, very negative'.⁴³ Lyons later recalled that he looked with 'hard eyes' as 'anger rose' in his throat, and in 'courteous and dignified dismissal' showed them the door.⁴⁴ When the minister for transport, Eddie Ward reviewed the women's rally as nothing more than a 'jaunt' attended by a few women enticed by free meals and transport, Millicent was incensed, promptly riposting in a letter to the editor that '623 women' attended this meeting as 'a grave patriotic duty'. They shared transport costs, she declared, and provided their own meals.⁴⁵ This would not be the only time Millicent employed the press to re-shape the public impression of the crusade.

The AWMAS also produced a series of propaganda pamphlets as campaign props. One cautioned that no one was 'beyond the scope of the influence of Bank Nationalisation', and since this policy emanated from Lenin it would bring 'Dictatorship', 'The Servile State' and 'Bureaucrats in Jackboots'. Another, warning of 'STEP BY STEP' socialisation, was addressed to 'Everywoman', invoking the allegorical medieval morality play *Everyman*. Just as Everyman's deeds are judged on the day of reckoning so, the pamphlet warned, women's deeds would be judged on Election Day. The message was clear, women should join the 'Crusade for Liberty' to prevent the demise of democracy and ensure the nation's salvation.⁴⁶

40 'Women Protest to Chifley on Bank Bill', *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 25 October 1947, 1; 'Menzies on Bank Bill To-Night', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 October 1947, 1.

41 Dame Enid Lyons, *Among the Carrion Crows* (Adelaide: Rigby, 1978), 100–01.

42 'Women's Indignant Protest Against Bank Nationalisation', *Advocate*, 23 October 1947, 5.

43 'Lady Brookes Suggested a Dark Chapter in Chifley's Past', *Sun*, 26 October 1947, 35.

44 Lyons, *Carrion Crows*, 101.

45 Millicent Preston Stanley Vaughan, 'Women's Journey to Canberra', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 October 1947, 2.

46 MPS Papers, MS 9062, Box 1, Folder 1, NLA.

Yet another pamphlet targeted the fashion-conscious segment of the audience. Captioned 'Chip, Evatt & Co Drapers', it featured a fashion dummy attired in full skirt, tightly belted waist, bar-jacket and high heels. The dummy was labelled 'The New Look', a reference to Christian Dior's February 1947 Paris collection, which heralded a return to pre-war feminine fashion. The AWMAS pamphlet juxtaposed this feminine outline with pointed references to military features—epaulets, cuffs and breast pockets—to signal a masculine, militarised New Look for Australian women. More menacingly, the model's face depicted a mask of Ben Chifley replete with signature pipe and beneath it Joseph Stalin's visage was starkly visible.⁴⁷ These evocative pamphlets, megaphoning communist contamination of the Labor Party became powerful props in the Movement's theatrical extravaganza.

On Tour

The next stage of the production schedule involved a tour to regional areas to recruit women to the Movement. Millicent travelled 5,000 miles around the eastern states in seven weeks, giving speeches and casting women in the AWMAS chorus.⁴⁸ At Bathurst she addressed the 'largest women's meeting ever held' there and painted a picture of the 'queues, monotony, drabness and lack of food' that would follow if the Labor Government implemented its intention to nationalise banks. 'Free enterprise was older than Karl Marx, older than Ben Chifley', she told the audience, and it 'would outlast him'.⁴⁹ She made a 'flying visit to Brisbane', speaking to a rally of 700 women, which promptly set up a branch, and toured the Riverina in southern NSW, an area renowned for its anti-communist towns, organising them for 'the battle'.⁵⁰ Her dramatic rhetoric, which cast women as noble warriors in a fight for the soul of the nation, attracted members across Australia and garnered mainstream press attention.

After Chifley announced that a referendum would be held on 29 May 1948—not on bank nationalisation but on rents and prices—the AWMAS campaign refocused its message. The referendum sought the

47 Ibid.

48 'Women's Move Against Socialisation', *Argus*, 13 November 1947, 8.

49 'Mrs Preston Stanley Vaughan Speaks at Bathurst Meeting', *Blue Mountains Advertiser*, 21 October 1949, 10.

50 'Queensland Women Move Against Socialisation', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 November 1947, 2; 'Women's Movement Against Socialism Active in Riverina', *Daily Advertiser*, 7 November 1947, 3.

people's agreement to extend the government's war-time powers to make laws to control rents and prices. The announcement was seen as another step on the road to centralised control of the financial system, which, coupled with the bank nationalisation policy, the AWMAS asserted would lead to socialism, and ultimately to communism. Appearing at numerous events in capital cities and regional towns, Millicent vigorously advocated for the 'no' vote. At a rally in Wagga Wagga, she declaimed in her resonant tones that women had suffered the privations of rationing during the war but they had 'staggered on, human camels, the burden bearers of a nation'.⁵¹ Her use of the camel metaphor appeared to be spontaneous but she was immediately alert to its power. Camels had been a recurring theme in the Australian press because of their capacity to carry enormous loads, bearing the burdens of essential supplies as they traversed central Australia's inhospitable terrain. Millicent appropriated and embellished these ideas in a visual image of a camel with a woman's face, her head adorned with a dainty bonnet and her back burdened with bulging string-bags of groceries.⁵² This camel image became the campaign's central motif.

Act Two

The Sydney Town Hall provided the venue for the opening sally of the crusade's second act with about 1,000 women gathering to support the 'no' vote. The performance commenced with the women chorusing 'No! No! A thousand times no!', the melodramatic lyrics of Leslie Sarony's Music Hall song that tells of an 'innocent maid', abducted by a 'poisonous villain' who demands she marry him.⁵³ When she refuses he ties her to railway tracks, but she is rescued by a hero. The AWMAS women sang of their determination not to be seduced by the 'poisonous villain' of socialism:

No! No! A thousand times no!
You cannot buy my caress!
No! No! A thousand times no!
I'd rather die than say yes!⁵⁴

51 'For Women', *Daily Advertiser*, 3 March 1948, 3.

52 MPS Papers, MS 9062, Box 1, Folder 1, NLA.

53 'Women Urge "No" Vote', *West Australian*, 22 May 1948, 5.

54 Leslie Sarony, 'No! No! A Thousand Times No!' (1934), *Monologues*, monologues.co.uk/musichall/Songs-N/No-No-A-Thousand-Times-No.htm.

This song cast the women as chorus in the age-old drama of good versus evil, now dramatised as capitalism versus communism. Another pamphlet embellished the message: 'Chif may not have the oomph of a Clark Gable or a Ronald Colman', it declared, citing popular film star idols, 'but he certainly achieved the new look'—a reference to the militarised look of socialist domination of the earlier propaganda pamphlets.⁵⁵ It was another nifty use of a prop to enhance the production. Not surprisingly, the chorus readily adopted several resolutions condemning the federal government's attempt to force socialism on the nation, its disregard for the hardships imposed on women by the ongoing strikes, its support for rationing and black marketeering and its failure to outlaw communism. This appeal to the emotions ensured the women left the rally clutching their pamphlets, humming the Sarony tune, determined to vote 'no' in the forthcoming referendum.⁵⁶

The referendum on rents and prices was defeated. Millicent boasted women were the 'dynamic influence' in this victory, a boast that, despite her exaggeration, was not without merit. She went on to assert, incorrectly, the defeat of the referendum marked the 'first time in history' women were 'aroused' and 'thinking on non-party lines' about the 'welfare of the home and the influence of politics on family life'.⁵⁷ Whether the women who voted 'no' were focused on non-party issues or merely persuaded by the propaganda is open to question. Despite this victory, the crusade for liberty was not yet over. The bank nationalisation policy remained on the agenda with a federal election due in 1949.

On Tour Again

By mid-1948, the AWMAS membership had expanded with regional branches, particularly in NSW, reporting increased membership and the creation of new branches.⁵⁸ Other distinguished AWMAS members, such as the former aviatrix Nancy Bird Walton and Mrs Thelma Harvey, a 'skilled and forceful debater', now joined Millicent on the campaign trail.⁵⁹

55 MPS Papers, MS 9062, Box 1, Folder 1, NLA.

56 'Thousand Women Sing "No"', *Sun*, 21 May 1948, 2.

57 'Women Organise Against Socialism', *Land*, 4 June 1948, 22–23.

58 'Big Increase in Membership of A.W.M.A.S.', *Daily Advertiser*, 19 November 1948, 2.

59 'Basketball Court at Blackheath', *Blue Mountains Advertiser*, 12 November 1948, 2; Melanie Oppenheimer, 'Bate, Thelma Florence (1904–1984)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bate-thelma-florence-12184/text21841.

When Harvey spoke in tandem with Millicent at a rally in the prime minister's Lithgow electorate, she told the audience socialisation offers nothing more than the 'equality of misery' and it was 'within the hands of the women to save this country' from this scourge. Millicent declared the Communist party had 'bound, gagged and manacled' the unions as she expounded on the connections between socialism and communism. The only difference between the two, she told the audience, was communists used weapons while socialists worked through industry. But, she warned, socialism inevitably led to communism. Echoing Churchill, she declared communism had brought down the 'iron curtain' on 12 European nations and it was now bent on world domination. The AWMAS was not anti-Labor but anti-socialist, she assured the women, but they must remember the Labor Party was pledged to socialism. Millicent and Harvey felt smug satisfaction when an AWMAS branch was formed in the Labor prime minister's own electorate.⁶⁰ At a rally on the NSW Central Coast, they warned that the communists would exert 'total government control' over everyday lives and damage children's futures.⁶¹ At a Wagga Wagga meeting, Harvey explained that women could not 'remain aloof from affairs of the country'. The objective of the AWMAS, she said, was 'to educate women politically ... to realise the seriousness of the present political trend in this country'. The main trend was the communist infiltration of the coal miners' union; the 'ordinary coal miner', she told the audience, was 'a decent chap' but the unions were 'communist-controlled'.⁶² This theme would gain traction over the next months as the coal strikes intensified.

The CPA-dominated Miners' Federation, frustrated at the blockages to its campaign for a wage rise, a 35-hour week and workers' long-service leave, instituted rolling coal strikes, causing blackouts that not only affected industry but played havoc with women's household maintenance. Despite both Prime Minister Chifley and his deputy Arthur Calwell opposing the miners' strike, the AWMAS was convinced the government was permitting the Miners' Federation to wage a 'cold war' on Australia's shores. The press carried soft-news stories of the difficulties mothers faced: 'the staggering of the bath hours ... trying to heat hot drinks before the youngsters were put to bed, and warming cots on cold nights

60 'Women Speakers Assail Communism – Branch of Anti-Socialisation Movement Formed', *Lithgow Mercury*, 29 July 1948, 4.

61 'Two Women Will Speak Against Socialisation', *Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate*, 6 September 1949, 1.

62 'Communism and Socialism Alike, Speaker Claims', *Daily Advertiser*, 19 November 1948, 2.

without hot water bottles'.⁶³ As the situation intensified, the AWMAS attracted 'hundreds of housewives, religious workers, business persons, clerks, actresses, ex-service women and members of various clubs and associations'.⁶⁴ However, it is unlikely any of these women 'would have classified themselves as members of the working-class', this was primarily a middle-class organisation.⁶⁵

This became obvious to Millicent when she staged an anti-strike rally in the working-class mining city of Newcastle. A group of women 'interjected angrily', and despite her forceful oratory, two thirds—mainly miners' wives—noisily stormed out of the hall and assembled in the park opposite, where they staged their own rally, loudly declaring support for the miners and the strike.⁶⁶ Such opposition was not only located in mining towns. The Sydney-based New Housewives' Association, a radical breakaway group from the Housewives' Association, which attracted socialists such as Jessie Street, became a formidable antagonist. Street had been labelled 'Red' despite never joining the Communist Party and was later 'forced to resign' from the ALP in order to maintain her membership of the New Housewives' Association.⁶⁷ A woman of strong views, she had crossed swords with members of various women's organisations, including Millicent at the Feminist Club. With these two determined women prominently positioned in ideologically opposed organisations, it is not surprising they came to blows.

Act Three

With the federal election only months away, the July 1949 AWMAS rally was once again located in the Sydney Town Hall. However, a contingent of antagonists from the New Housewives' Association infiltrated and disrupted the anti-strike protest. One journalist described the 'wild meeting of 2000 housewives' where 'Communist sympathisers' let forth a 'barrage of catcalls' and exchanged punches.⁶⁸ Another reported that young women attempted to hand out pamphlets to put the 'miners' side of the case', but when police seized the pamphlets, they placed themselves

63 'Where Will it End? Women's Reaction To Coal Strike', *Daily Examiner*, 30 June 1949, 2.

64 'Aust. Women Rally for Anti-Socialism Fight', *Sun*, 28 July 1949, 18.

65 Eather, 'Every Woman', 61.

66 'Noisy Women's Rally in Newcastle', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 August 1949, 4.

67 'Can Work Better Outside ALP, Declares Mrs. Street', *Tribune*, 19 January 1949, 7.

68 'Wild Meeting of Women At Sydney Town Hall', *Cairns Post*, 21 July 1949, 1.

‘strategically’ around the hall and interjected during Millicent’s speech.⁶⁹ One account presented the fracas as a generational clash. Young women erupted in a ‘running fire of interjections’—‘the bosses’, not the workers, had ‘caused this trouble’—while ‘elderly women’ told them to ‘shut up’. Another depicted it as ‘gate-crashing Reds screaming abuse, causing uproar and Millicent refusing to allow the ‘well known socialist’ Jessie Street to speak.’⁷⁰ The communist newspaper *Tribune* accused Millicent of physically restraining Street and alleged she stated the AWMAS opposed the miners regardless of whether they were right or wrong.⁷¹ Dramatic headlines such as ‘punches and uproar’, ‘blows exchanged’ and ‘bedlam’, cast the AWMAS women as harridans and witches rather than virtuous crusading warriors. The following week, a letter in the *Herald* from Pat Grayson, a frequent correspondent, congratulated Millicent for ignoring her opponents’ ‘puerile utterances’, but criticised her for not adhering to her own democratic principles in denying Street the right to speak.⁷² A *Herald* photograph captured the conflict: Millicent kneeling indecorously on the platform, gesturing aggressively at Street.⁷³ It was not her finest hour.

Four days later, the *Sun* featured an article that re-cast Millicent as ‘A Fighter for Women’. The journalist described AWMAS as an organisation that was ‘powerful, vital and strong numerically’, depicted Millicent in hagiographic terms as the instigator of ‘reforms for women’, and praised the motions the meeting had passed condemning communism, socialism and the ‘lawless and heartless strike’.⁷⁴ The positive spin of this article, which countered the initial derogatory reports, appears to be another of Millicent’s crafty propaganda interventions. Millicent, a politically astute ‘media tart’, engaged a sympathetic journalist to paper over the infamy depicted in previous reports.⁷⁵

69 ‘Women Exchange Blows At Strike Protest Meeting’, *Canberra Times*, 21 July 1949, 3.

70 ‘Strife When Women Meet On Strike’, *Daily Examiner*, 21 July 1949, 1; ‘Fights at Women’s Meeting’, *Courier-Mail*, 21 July 1949, 1.

71 ‘Rebuff to “Lib.” Women’s Attack on Coalminers’, *Tribune*, 23 July 1949, 6.

72 ‘Heckling at Meeting’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 July 1949, 2.

73 ‘Women Figure in Rowdy Scenes’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 July 1949, 4.

74 ‘A Fighter for Women’, *Sun*, 24 July 1949, 9.

75 Julia Baird, *Media Tarts: How the Australian Press Frames Female Politicians* (Melbourne: Scribe Publishing, 2004), 267.

As the December 1949 election loomed, Millicent plotted the crusade's grand finale. In November she sent a cable to former British prime minister Winston Churchill.⁷⁶ 'Would you consider invitation to visit Australia before Federal election, December 10,' she asked, 'under the auspices of powerful non-party, non-sectarian women's organisation opposing socialisation through over 100 branches.'⁷⁷ Did she really expect Churchill to travel to the antipodes to support the AWMAS campaign? Although Churchill had modified his earlier views about women after witnessing their contribution to the war effort, he maintained 'women ought not to be treated the same as men ... the sooner they are back at their homes the better'.⁷⁸ However, renowned for his anti-communist rhetoric, he would have been sympathetic to the AWMAS cause and had he accepted Millicent's invitation he would have been the grand finale's star attraction. His cabled response, 'thank you so much for your kind invitation. Regret obligations here prevent me from accepting it', was unsurprisingly diplomatic.⁷⁹

Millicent's manoeuvre attracted publicity, although not the kind she desired. The union newspaper *Australian Worker* accused her of being not only 'non-party' but non '*compos mentis*'. Her invitation was a 'panic SOS message' that proved the conservatives were facing inevitable defeat in the election. The Liberal Party would be irretrievably shattered, the journalist declared. The Victorian Liberals and the Country Party were fighting each other 'like dogs and cats' and the NSW branch was totally at odds with 'Mrs Crawford Vaughan (née Miss Preston Stanley)' and her women's group. The December elections, the journalist predicted, would be the 'greatest landslide' for Labor in the political history of Australia—a bold prediction that did not come to pass.⁸⁰

Grand Finale

Despite Churchill's absence, the AWMAS envisaged a grand finale razzmatazz circus parade through Sydney Streets lead by a live camel. The *Sun* asked readers:

76 'Churchill to be Invited Here', *Sun*, 4 November 1949, 8.

77 'Want Churchill', *Courier Mail*, 5 November 1949, 4.

78 'Churchill and Women', *Churchill Archive*, www.churchillarchive.com/collection-highlights/churchill-and-women.

79 'Mr Churchill Declines', *West Australian*, 19 November 1949, 11.

80 'Election Landslide in Favor of Labor', *Australian Worker*, 9 November 1949, 3.

Where are those camels? Has anyone got a camel to spare next Wednesday? The Women's Movement Against Socialisation is looking for a camel—any age, size or sex—for an advertising stunt. The camel, if obtainable, will be decked in a mask, a ladies' hat with a large feather, and a huge string-bag full of parcels, and paraded from Parliament House to the Town Hall to open a lunch-hour rally at noon on Wednesday.⁸¹

No live camel opened the lunch-hour rally on Wednesday 7 December, three days before the federal election. Undaunted, the AWMAS staged a 'Monster Women's Rally' with all the flourish of a Tivoli Vaudeville show.⁸² Hundreds of women, many costumed in pinafores emblazoned with Union Jacks and the question 'what does this flag mean to you?', flocked to the Sydney Town Hall.⁸³ The show began with a 'musical programme of political and other songs'. Then Gordon Currie, who, like Bob Dyer and Jack Davey, was a celebrity radio quiz host, engaged the audience in a 'Mum's Quiz'. Currie peppered the contestants lined up across the stage with questions. 'Who owns a £25,000 mansion in Vaucluse?' he asked. 'Dan Mulcahy', squealed an excited woman and the audience erupted in applause as Currie rewarded her with a string-bag of groceries. 'What member of parliament has a bathroom costing £200?'. Another woman twittered 'Dr Evatt', as she grasped the string-bag prize. 'Who is the Federal member who is likened to Abe Lincoln?' Currie was assailed by a thousand voices calling 'Chifley'. It was the correct answer, but how to determine which woman should have the prize?⁸⁴ The quiz over, Currie, with a grand flourish, unfurled a banner 'depicting Mum as a camel, laden with parcels and wearing a straw hat'.⁸⁵ The symbolism resonated around the auditorium.

To the sound of a march, 'Daughters of Australia'—one of Millicent's own compositions—the star cast entered stage left as the audience settled down to absorb their speeches. Jennie Broad, who had been a Women's Air Force pilot delivering planes from factories to airfields and had spent time in the Middle East before migrating to Australia after the war, recounted her personal experience as a 'fugitive from English Socialism'. The audience took careful note of her warning that 'socialisation is the greatest swindle of the age'. Miss Muriel Doherty, who joined the post-war United Nations

81 'Spotlight on the News: Where are those Camels', *Sun*, 5 December 1949, 4.

82 'Free', *Cumberland Argus & Fruitgrowers Advocate*, 30 November 1949, 6.

83 'Women Wear Union Jacks at Town Hall Rally', *Sun*, 7 December 1949, 33.

84 'Women Answer a Quiz', *Sun*, 7 December 1949, 7.

85 Isla Brook, 'My Sydney Survey', *Smith's Weekly*, 17 December 1949, 26.

Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and was appointed matron to the recently liberated Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany, warned the women they must decide whether they wanted to 'remain a free democracy' or be 'bound under the Russian system'.⁸⁶ The women made their decision. Mrs Lilla O'Malley Wood, widow of a prominent Sydney banker, assured the audience that AWMAS had 'the full support of the women of NSW' and, referring obliquely to criticisms of their supposedly shadowy financial backers, asserted it was from these women supporters that 'we got our money'. The audience nodded in approval, they had paid their two shillings per annum subscription.⁸⁷

The young star then took the stage. Sixteen-year-old Janice Christy, who had been runner-up in the Royal Empire Society's public speaking competition, spoke on behalf of the younger generation as she addressed the older women gathered before her:

We were born during a depression, we grew up during a war and we have entered adolescence in a period of inflation. We have little to look back upon. We are hoping that we may look forward with optimism to a happier and more contented future.⁸⁸

Her speech proved a fitting climax to the spectacle, the damsel in distress reaching out to those women who could save her generation from a future of further trauma by casting their votes for liberty. Finally, Millicent delivered the epilogue. They had been waiting for this moment since 1947 when Prime Minister Chifley first 'announced his intention to nationalise banks', she said, and on Saturday their vote would decide whether Australia would have 'free parliaments and electorates' or succumb to socialism.⁸⁹ The spectacle over, the actors exited and the audience dispersed.

Review

When the polls were counted after the 10 December election, the Labor Party won 47 seats in the House of Representatives while the Liberal-Country Party Coalition won 74. On 19 December 1949, Robert Gordon Menzies returned as prime minister, a position he would hold until

86 R. Lynette Russell, 'Doherty, Muriel Knox (1896–1988)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/doherty-muriel-knox-12427/text22343.

87 'Women Wear Union Jacks at Town Hall Rally', *Sun*, 7 December 1949, 33.

88 Ibid.

89 Ibid.

January 1966. The mainstream press welcomed the election outcome, declaring socialism soundly defeated. One journalist suggested, somewhat optimistically, that the results were ‘accepted by all sides with an unusual absence of acrimony’, while another stated the ‘coalition Government now has an opportunity of inspiring and leading the nation to better days and greater achievements’.⁹⁰ Another poetically proclaimed that ‘the spring tide of Socialism set in strongly after the war but now it is ebbing unmistakably’, a proclamation that would prove somewhat premature.⁹¹

Journalist Joan Pilgrim, whose ‘Women’s Interests’ columns commonly tackled contemporary social and political issues, praised the women who ‘went out into the highways and byways ... spreading the gospel of free enterprise’—the ‘gospel’ metaphor an apt descriptor of the women’s missionary zeal—and applauded the ‘big part’ AWMAS women played in the election outcome.⁹² The director of the Institute of Public Affairs considered the AWMAS had made a contribution to the Liberal victory and advised the incoming prime minister to write to Millicent acknowledging the women’s support. While the campaign’s contribution is unquantifiable, historian Cathy Jenkins suggests it ‘helped defeat the federal government’s attempt to nationalise the Australian banking system’.⁹³ Whether it saw the end of socialism in Australia is another matter.

Epilogue

The defeat of the Chifley Labor Government in 1949 put an end to the bank nationalisation policy but not to the Cold War. Although, as Gregory Melleuish points out communism was ‘in decline in Australia by the early 1950s’, ‘reds under the beds’ suspicions simmered for some years.⁹⁴ The Menzies Government raised the stakes with its unsuccessful attempt to ban the Communist Party of Australia in 1951 and its management of the 1954 ‘Petrov Affair’.⁹⁵ At the same time, tensions within the ALP,

90 ‘Editorial. Christmas 1949’, *Construction*, 21 December 1949, 1; ‘Moves in Asia Important to Australia’, *Farmer and Settler*, 30 December 1949, 1.

91 ‘Receding World Tide of Socialism’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 December 1949, 2.

92 Joan Pilgrim, ‘Women’s Interests. A Woman’s Viewpoint’, *Land*, 24 March 1950, 34.

93 AWMAS Second Annual Report, 15 March 1950, IPA (NSW) records, The Sydney Institute; Jenkins, *No Ordinary Lives*, 54.

94 Gregory Melleuish, ‘Bob Santamaria, “The Most Significant” Figure in Australian Politics Never to Have Been in Parliament’, *Conversation*, 12 June 2020, theconversation.com/bob-santamaria-the-most-significant-figure-in-australian-politics-never-to-have-been-in-parliament-138719.

95 Robert Manne, *The Petrov Affair* (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2004).

particularly those precipitated by B. A. Santamaria's anti-communist Catholic 'Movement', which was vehemently opposed by Dr H.V. Evatt, precipitated the 1955 ALP 'split' and the founding of the Democratic Labor Party.⁹⁶ However, as the Menzies Government entrenched its power and Kruschew's 'Secret Speech' began the Cold War thaw, fears of the socialisation of Australia dwindled. Millicent, retaining her Feminist Club presidency and AWMAS directorship, turned her attention to another child custody case, an anti-compulsory union membership petition and sympathy for Mrs Petrov who was 'caught in a tragic net of circumstances'.⁹⁷ As the AWMAS crusading spirit faded, branches were disbanded and the movement's initiator, Millicent Preston Stanley Vaughan, died in June 1955.⁹⁸

From an historical perspective, the AWMAS crusade demonstrates the potential power of a national grass-roots organisation to influence the political agenda. Moreover, it provides insights into the contemporary women's movement 'March 4 Justice'. Just as Millicent's 'pencil, phone and brain' initiative lit the spark for AWMAS, so Janine Hendry's tweet, 'is it possible to form a ring of people around the perimeter of Parl Hse [sic]' sparked the recent marches in Australia's capital cities and regional towns, a movement that is yet to run its course.⁹⁹ Like Millicent, Hendry swiftly 'put together this amazing team of women' and gave birth to a national movement.¹⁰⁰ This analysis of the AWMAS crusade for liberty arguably offers insights into strategies that can be employed to sustain the momentum of this movement.

96 Melleuish, 'Bob Santamaria'.

97 'The Baby Case has Started Something', *Sun*, 27 September 1953, 47; 'Women's Union Protest Petition', *Sun*, 27 November 1953, 2; 'Feminist Club Horrified', *Herald*, 20 April 1954, 3.

98 Eather, 'Every Woman', 66.

99 Janine Hendry, Twitter post, 25 February 2021, 10.48 am, twitter.com/janine_hendry/status/1364723860126375941.

100 Janet Topsfield, "'It Was a Visceral Anger': The Tweet that Spawned Nationwide Protests", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 March 2021, www.smh.com.au/national/it-was-a-visceral-anger-the-tweet-that-spawned-nationwide-protests-20210311-p579uk.html.

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