

# THE WOMAN'S DREADNOUGHT

Published by the WORKERS' SUFFRAGE FEDERATION

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Price One Penny

## THE TERRIBLE COURT-MARTIAL: By an American Journalist

I have always wanted to see a court-martial. I have, I must confess, always stood in some awe of a court-martial. It may come from childish recollections of the Dreyfus affair, or from the smothered reports of the Ferrer trial, but somehow I have always pictured a court-martial as something tremendous. I imagined it as resembling the doctor's examination at the Sorbonne, a row of very severe-looking officers sitting around a high bench, and firing withering questions at the unfortunate criminal. But my dreams have been shattered. Now, when I think of a court-martial, I shall always think of Mill Hill, its small and dingy corridor, its dinky court-room, and its empty dignity.

When I heard that numbers of conscientious objectors were to be tried, I went to Mill Hill with great expectations. I had visions of a violent clash between two powerful ideals, between the strength of the State and the strength of the individual. There was no clash, there was no excitement; there was only monotony and a most efficient loss of time. The few interesting moments were entirely incidental; they were in no way the fault of the system. The accused and the soldier-witnesses were responsible for all of them.

I arrived just as the proceedings were about to commence. The prisoners, a few of their friends, their guards, and the soldiers who were to testify against them were all crowded into a little corridor outside the court-room, or what served as court-room. They were talking and laughing, and not in the least properly impressed by the solemnity of the occasion. It was the second offence for one of them; but, although certain of two years away from his wife and two boys, he seemed to enjoy the situation immensely. On the whole, it was much more like a happy family waiting for a picnic train than a group of desperate individuals, dangerous to the safety of the State, awaiting military trial.

As his name was called out, each man was marched between two soldiers into a very small and ordinary-looking room. Nothing could have been farther from what I had imagined. Three officers sat around an insignificant table, and instead of looking down from the height of an imposing bench, looked up at the prisoner standing before them. They did not keep up a string of withering questions, but carefully followed the procedure as outlined on the forms before them. In fact, they did not speak to the accused except when required to. The accusation was read. The prosecutor testified, judiciously stopping to give his fellow-officer time to write out in longhand what he had to say. Witnesses were then called in to prove that the accused actually "refused and did not obey the order" to undress for medical examination—or perhaps to put on khaki—when told to do so by some portly N.C.O. As he was sworn in, each repeated with terrified sincerity, "So help me God," and kissed the Bible with a loud smack, as if the truth of his statement depended upon the amount of noise he could make. The statement itself was invariably well rehearsed, with irrelevant but convenient pauses for the recorder. During his presence in the room, practically every witness stood at exaggerated attention, and shook from head to feet, lest he should make a slip that would displease his superior. I remember one especially. I wanted to tell him to calm down, or he would surely shake his khaki off—and it wouldn't be for medical examination.

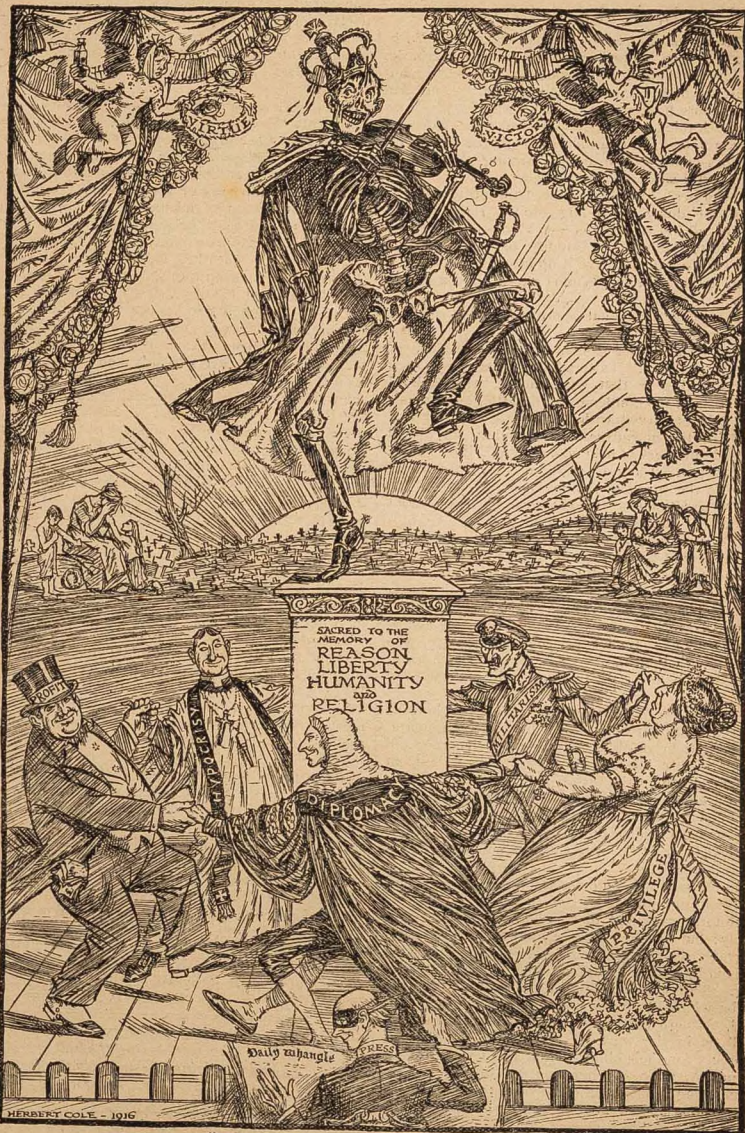
The next relief came when the prisoner was allowed to say whatever he chose in his own defence. Of those I heard, all but one was read. They were very simple statements of the men's belief in God, and their abhorrence of War. The second-offender alone enlarged a little. He not only told the court what he thought of the whole military system, but what he thought of the court itself. He even predicted what his sentence would be; and no doubt his prediction has proven correct by this time. The proceedings then relapsed into formalities that continued until the prisoner was led away to the guard-room. Another man was brought in, and the whole business gone over again. Exceedingly monotonous!

If a court-martial were staged in the settings I at one time imagined it to be, or if a shooting squad were waiting at the door, it would be really

imposing. But it is at present far from that. There is a certain amount of unimpressive dignity; the soldiers stand at attention, the court takes itself very seriously (or is extremely bored), everything is very formal. But one cannot help smiling when a number of men get together in a small room, and in a very dignified way publicly discuss another's refusal to undress at the bidding of a fat corporal as if it were the most serious of crimes—especially when the accused insists on remaining unconcerned. Personally, the only time I was impressed was when the man who had not prepared his declaration of faith stated his belief

in Christ and in the brotherhood of man in a simple, homely way, searching for words he could not find.

As I think it over, I wonder why the whole thing is not done entirely away with. It would be much more simple to put the men in prison without formalities; and that would not waste the time of the officers, of the privates, and of the men themselves. Of course, if they all have plenty of time to lose, that is a different matter. But, even so, if it no longer existed it could not spoil people's dreams about the terrible impressiveness of a military court.



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Chair: Mrs. BOYCE.

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WHAT'S ON? W.S.F. FIXTURES OUTDOOR

FRIDAY, APRIL 27th. Bonner Lane, Old Ford Road, 11.30 a.m., Mrs. Boyce. SATURDAY, APRIL 28th. Grundy Street, Poplar, 11.30 a.m., Miss Price. Hoxton Street, 2.30 p.m., Miss Price, Miss Beamish. Armath Road, Bow, 11.30 a.m., Mrs. Boyce. HAGUE STREET, Bethnal Green, 6.30 p.m., Mrs. Boyce. SUNDAY, APRIL 29th. Highbury Corner, 11.30 a.m., Miss Price. Osborn Street, Whitechapel, 11.30 a.m., Mrs. Bouvier. The Grove, Stratford, 11.30 a.m., Mrs. Boyce. "Salmon and Ball," Bethnal Green, 11.30 a.m., Mrs. Walker. Victoria Park, 4 p.m., Mrs. Boyce, Miss Price. MONDAY, APRIL 30th. Clock Tower, Burdett Road, 11.30 a.m., Mrs. Boyce, Miss Price. HAGUE STREET, Bethnal Green, 3.30 p.m., Mrs. Boyce, Miss Price. TUESDAY, MAY 1st. Piggott Street, Poplar, 12 (noon), Miss Price. WEDNESDAY, MAY 2nd. Grundy Street, Poplar, 6.30 p.m., Mrs. Boyce. THURSDAY, MAY 3rd. Cannon Street Road, Commercial Road, 6.30 p.m., Mrs. Boyce. FRIDAY, MAY 4th. Beckton Road, Canning Town, 7 p.m., Mrs. Boyce. SATURDAY, MAY 5th. Well Street and Morning Lane, Hackney, 11.30 a.m., Mrs. Boyce. Bonner Lane and Old Ford Road, 11.30 a.m., Miss Price. Fire Station, Hoxton, 2.30 p.m., Miss Price, Miss Beamish.

INDOOR

CHANDOS HALL "At Home," 21a Maiden Lane (off Bedford Street, Strand).—To-day (Saturday), 3.30 p.m.—Mrs. Bouvier, "The Present Outlook"; Mr. Philip Frankford, "Socialist Bureaux"; May 5th, Mr. G. P. Gooch, "The Future of Constantinople"; Miss M. O'Callaghan, "The Present Outlook." BOW WOMEN'S HALL, 400 Old Ford Road.—To-morrow (Sunday, April 29th), 7 p.m. Mr. Maurice Gregory, Secretary of the Society of Friends, "The Criminal Law Amendment Bill." Chair: Mrs. Boyce, Singing Class Wednesday, 8 p.m. Thursday, 8 p.m., Speakers' Class, Mrs. Boyce. BROMLEY, 53, St. Leonard's Street.—Monday, April 30th, 2 p.m., Mrs. Drake. POPLAR, 20 Railway Street.—Wednesday, April 25th, 8.15 p.m., Mrs. Boyce. OLD GRAVEL PIT HALL COMMITTEE ROOM, Valette Street, Hackney.—Tuesday, May 1st, 7 p.m., Miss Thomlinson. CANNING TOWN, 124 Barking Road.—Wednesday, May 2nd, 7.30 p.m., Branch meeting, Miss Smyth. LEES HALL, Barking Road.—May 6th, 7 p.m., Judge Neil, "Mothers' Pensions"; Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, Miss Mary Neal. Chair: Mrs. Drake.

OTHER ORGANISATIONS

At Kingsley Hall, Bow, on Sunday next, April 29th, Mr. John Scurr will speak. Discussion 9.30. William Morris Hall, Somers Road, Walthamstow, May 1st, 2.30 p.m., Mrs. Bouvier. May-Day Labour Demonstration, Finsbury Park, May 6th, 3.30 p.m. We understand the Committee is endeavouring to organise a children's contingent. All progressive Societies and Trade Unions are asked to bring their banners. All communications and subscriptions should be sent to L. S. Howard, 75b Grand Parade, Green Lanes, Harringay, N. Tuesday, May 1st, at 7.30 p.m., Mr. Williams will speak on "Base Camp Life in France," in Emily Davison Lodge, 144 High Holborn, W.C. Refreshments till 8.15. Suffragettes of W.S.P.U. Admission 9d.

MANCHESTER.

Clarion Cafe, Friday, April 27th, 7.30 p.m., Miss Owen on "Mothers' Pensions"

Judge Neil and Miss Sylvia Pankhurst in WALES

SUNDAY, APRIL 29th 2.45 p.m. THE RINK, MERTHYR Admission by Silver Collection SUNDAY, APRIL 29th 7.30 p.m. GRAND THEATRE, ABERAMAN Chair: Mrs. ROSE DAVIES Admission by Silver Collection

PUBLIC MEETING Victoria Park, To-Morrow SUNDAY, 4 p.m.

Speakers: Mrs. BOYCE and Miss PRICE

Deal with our Advertisers, and mention the "Dreadnought."

W.S.F. BRANCHES

ARE YOU AN ACTIVE WORKING MEMBER? Please Address: Branch Business to Miss Lynch; "Dreadnought" Reports to Miss O'Callaghan, 400 Old Ford Road, E. 3.

LONDON

BARKING.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Langford, Ailsa Craig, 97 Essex Road. Bow.—400 Old Ford Road, E. Hon. Secretary: Miss Stevens. Branch meetings are held every second and fourth Monday. Next meeting, Monday, 30th, 8 p.m. Business.—Annual Conference Resolutions. DREADNOUGHT sales week ending April 21st, 515; Miss Harriet, 120; Miss Mackay, 32; Miss Hepburn, 26; Miss O'Brien, 25; Mrs. Greer, 12; general, 300. BROMLEY.—53 St. Leonard's Street. Hon. Secs.: Mrs. Lansbury, Mrs. Wood. CANNING TOWN.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Parsons, 94 Ravenscroft Road. CENTRAL LONDON.—Hon. Sec.: Miss Casey, 29b Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 78. ENFIELD AND EDMONTON.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Beavis, 171 Church Street, Lower Edmonton. HOXTON AND NOTTON.—Hon. Sec.: Miss Beamish, St. Stephen's Shop, 85 Hoxton Street, N.—This shop is open daily for the sale of Socialist, Labour and Feminist literature. Hours, 12 noon to 7 p.m.; Saturdays, 12 noon to 8 p.m. Closed all day Thursdays. If you deal with us you will help the funds. Branch meetings every Thursday at 8 p.m. Next on May 3rd, speaker Miss Lynch. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 162. LEYTON.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Hart, 73 Calderon Road. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 52. POPLAR.—Hon. Sec.: Miss E. Lagsding, 20 Railway Street. TUDAL BASIN.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Drake, 49 Crediton Road. DREADNOUGHT sales average 36. ST. PANCRAS.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Redgrove, B.S.P. Hall, 44 Malden Road, Kentish Town. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 13. WILLESDEN.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Sheppard, 141 Villiers Road. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 12. Branch meetings, Monday 30th, 7.30 p.m., and alternate Mondays at B.S.P. Hall, 148-150 High Road, Willesden Green, N.W.

PROVINCES

BIRMINGHAM.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Henson, 85 Watford Road, St. Paul's, Birmingham. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 226. BRADFORD.—Hon. Sec.: Miss McHale, 12 Aire Dale College Terrace. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 26. BRIGHOUSE.—Hon. Sec.: Miss Woodhead, Wood View, Shelf, near Halifax. BRYNMAWR AND NANTYGLO.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Hayward, Codsall. BURNLEY.—Hon. Sec. pro tem.; Mrs. Mortimer Holden, The Nurseries, Accrington. CHOPWELL.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Bell, 62 Forth Street. Fortnightly meetings are to be held to discuss such books as "Woman and Economics," "Woman and Labour," etc. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 12. CORNSAY AND QUEBEC.—Hon. Sec. pro tem.: Mrs. Winter, 106 High Street. Branch meeting, Monday, at 197 High Street, Cornsay. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 30. DONCASTER.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Kent, 32 St. Sepulchre Gate. FERRHILL.—Hon. Sec.: Miss Ruby Stoddart, 12 Hackwood Street, Dear Bank. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 12. HUDDERSFIELD.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Key, Bradford Road. HULL.—Hon. Secretary: Mrs. Bryan, 91 Derringham Street, Springbank. LEEDS.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Hunter, 7 Sugdenfold, Armley. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 72. LICHETER.—Hon. Sec.: Miss Helen Bakewell, 28 Macdonald Street, Bellgrave. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 13. MANCHESTER.—Hon. Sec.: Miss F. Wassilevski, 18 Broughton Street, N. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 26. MEDOMSEY.—Hon. Sec.: Tom Orr, Esq., 6 Derwent Cottages, Durham. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 24. NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Hon. Sec.: Mr. Nicholson, 19 Alexandra Road, North Heaton. PRUDHOE-ON-TYNE.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Parks, 4 Riding Terrace, Mickle Square. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 8. PORTSMOUTH.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Clarges, 200 Westfield Road, E. Southsea. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 30. ROTHERHAM, WAKEFIELD.—Organiser: Miss Stephen, 33 Hopwood Street, Hill. SHEFFIELD.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Manoin, 98 Gell Street. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 156. SOUTHAMPTON.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Samuel 33, Mount Street. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 12. STIRCHLEY.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. M. Henson, 85 Watford Road, King's Norton, Birmingham; Assistant Sec.: Miss Shepley. YORK.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Hall, 43 Lowther Street. WORKINGTON.—Hon. Sec.: Mr. Martin Howard, 48 Beeby Street.

SCOTLAND

GLASGOW.—Hon. Sec.: Lachlan Smith, Esq., 126 Bothwell Street.

BIRMINGHAM CONFERENCE

The Conference on "Mothers' Pensions," held in the Priory Rooms on Saturday, April 21st, was attended by a large number of delegates. There was great disappointment and anxiety caused by Judge Neil's absence, but Mr. G. Lansbury, who spoke in his place, was given a very cordial welcome. The Chairman told the delegates of Judge Neil's work, and spoke of the great necessity here in England for a similar crusade. Mr. Lansbury spoke at length on the conditions affecting children here—the Poor Law arrangements by which children are denied a mother's care, the awful existence of the widows who struggle to maintain their little ones, and the penalising of the illegitimate child and its mother. He recommended reform on the lines of the Scotch system, saying that the Health Committees should judge of cases and not the Poor Law Guardians. Mrs. Henson, W.S.F., moved the following resolution:—"That this Conference of Women's Societies, Trade Unions, Women's Co-operative Guilds, Women's Adult Schools, Woman Suffrage Societies, Temperance Societies, Trades Council, Labour and Socialist organisations, calls upon the Government to follow the example of the American States, and introduce a scheme of Mothers' Pensions without delay." Mrs. Barrow Cadbury supported the resolution, which was passed unanimously.

STIRCHLEY.

The evening meeting at Stirchley was very successful. Miss Margaret Haly took the chair, and Mr. Lansbury again spoke. The meeting unanimously passed a resolution against Clause II. of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill now before Parliament, and also the following:—"This meeting calls on the Government to follow the example of the American States, and introduce a scheme of 'Mothers' Pensions' without delay." A. B.

Donations to be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Dr. Tchaykovsky, or to the Hon. Financial Secretary, Miss N. L. Smyth, 400 Old Ford Road, Bow, E. All parcels to 400 Old Ford Road, Bow, E.

GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGED

GENERAL FUND.—J. Coleman, Esq., £6; Miss D. M. Kent, £1 19s. 10d.; Mrs. Girdlestone, £1; Mrs. Despard, £1; Irene, per Mrs. Drake, £1; Mrs. Branch (monthly), 7s. 6d.; Miss L. Cutten (monthly), 5s.; Mrs. Tollemache, 2s. 6d.; Arthur Field, Esq., 2s.; Mr. Bracher, 1s. COLLECTIONS: Miss Price (two), £1 5s. 6d.; Mrs. Boyce (two), 14s. 4d.; Chandos Hall, 7s. 4d.; Miss Stephen, 5s. 6d.; Bow Women's Hall, 2s. 6d. DREADNOUGHT FUND.—Per Mrs. Drake, £1 10s.; Miss Mackay, 5s.; Miss L. Bent, 3s.; Mrs. Moore, 1s. 4d. MILK AND GENERAL DISTRESS.—Lady Stalbridge, £5; Misses Avril and Prunella Pott, 6s.; E. H. Jenkins, 4s. 6d.; Mrs. Giles (monthly), 4s.; Mrs. Clarke (Birmingham), 2s. COLLECTIONS: L.S.A. Tool Room, £1 9s. 7d.; Mothers at Bow Clinic, 16s.; Miss Mackay (churn), 8s. 8d. CLOTHES, ETC.—Mrs. Minturn Scott, Anon (woolies), Anon (shoes), Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Parry.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH

REPORT OF FIRST ANNUAL MEETING, 1917. The First Annual Meeting of the Birmingham Branch of the Workers' Suffrage Federation was held by the courtesy of Mrs. Henson, at 85 Watford Road, Kings Norton, on March 27th, 1917. The Secretary's report and balance-sheet was read and approved by the meeting. The meeting decided unanimously that no delegates could be sent this year to the forthcoming W.S.F. Conference. A resolution for Conference was passed, viz.—"That this Conference strongly disapproves of the recommendations of the Speaker's Conference and demands Adult Suffrage as the only possible solution of the Suffrage problem."

The following officers and members of committee were elected.—President, Mrs. Butler; Secretary, Mrs. Henson; Treasurer, Mrs. Durant; Committee, Miss A. F. Boden, Miss Manning, Mrs. Avery, Miss Shipley, Mrs. Death, Mrs. Chamberlain, Mr. Morcombe.

The business meeting was followed by a social evening, which was entirely arranged by Mrs. Henson. The meeting passed a vote of thanks to Mrs. Henson for the use of her room and for her efforts which made the evening such a great success. A vote of thanks was also passed to Miss Boden, in appreciation of her work in connection with the meetings.

SECRETARY'S REPORT, MARCH, 1917.

The Birmingham Branch of the Workers' Suffrage Federation was formed in March, 1916, Mrs. Boyce coming from London to start the organisation. A large number of meetings have been held during this first year, chiefly in Stirchley Institute. Sixty-seven members have joined, but only 28 have continued their subscriptions all through the year. During the summer months the work was mainly confined to selling the DREADNOUGHT, but in September fortnightly meetings were begun with a social evening. The fortnightly meetings have been continued throughout the winter, a number of them being devoted to the making of garments for the sale in London, and at others Miss Margaret Haly has given a series of educational lectures on "Internationalism." A large meeting was held on Saturday, March 17th, in the Priory Rooms, Birmingham, at which Miss Pankhurst spoke, and at which Miss M. Haly kindly took the chair. The amount in hand from the year's activities is 18s. 11d.

(Signed) A. F. BODEN, Hon. Sec.

MISCELLANEOUS ADVERTISEMENTS

FAMILY LIMITATION DOCTRINE. Post free, 14d.—Malthusian League, Queen Anne's Chambers, Westminster.

SUFFRAGE WORKERS should spend their holidays at "Sea View," Victoria Road, Brighton. Hostess, Miss Turner.

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