To The Women of Germany and Austria:
Open Christmas Letter from Manchester Suffragettes

Sisters,

Some of us wish to send you a word at this sad Christmastide though we can but speak through
the press. The Christmas message sounds like mockery to a world at war, but those of us who
wished and still wish for peace may surely offer a solemn greeting to such of you who feel as we
do. Do not let us forget that our very anguish unites us, that we are passing together through the
same experience of pain and grief.

Caught in the grip of terrible Circumstance, what can we do? Tossed on this turbulent sea of
human conflict, we can but moor ourselves to those calm shores whereon stand, like rocks, the
eternal verities- Love, Peace, Brotherhood.

We pray you to believe that come what may we hold to our faith in Peace and Goodwill between
nations; while technically at enmity in obedience to our rulers, we owe allegiance to that higher law
which bids us live at peace with all men.

Though our sons are sent to slay each other, and our hearts are torn by the cruelty of this fate, yet
through pain supreme we will be true to our common womanhood. We will let no bitterness enter
into this tragedy, made sacred by the life-blood of our best, nor mar with hate the heroism of their
sacrifice. Though much has been done on all sides you will, as deeply as ourselves, deplore, shall
we steadily refuse to give credence to those false tales so freely told us, each of the other?

We hope it will lessen your anxiety to learn we are doing our upmost to soften the lot of your
civilians and war prisoners within our shores, even as we rely on your goodness of heart to do the
same for ours in Germany and Austria.

Do you not feel that the vast slaughter of our opposing armies is a stain on civilisation and
Christianity, and that still deeper horror is aroused at the thought of those innocent victims, the
countless women, children, babes, old and sick, pursued by famine, disease and death in the
devastated areas, both East and West?

As we saw in South Africa and the Balkan States, the brunt of modern war falls upon non-
combatants, and the conscience of the world cannot bear the sight.

Is it not our mission to preserve life? Do not humanity and commonsense alike prompt us to join
hands with the women of neutral countries, and urge our rulers to stay further bloodshed?
Relief, however colossal, can reach but few. Can we sit still and let the helpless die in their
thousands, as die they must – unless we rouse ourselves in the name of Humanity to save them?
There is but one way to do this. We must all urge that peace be made with appeal to Wisdom and Reason. Since in the last resort it is these which must decide the issues, can they begin too soon, if it is to save womanhood and childhood as well as the manhood of Europe.

Even through the clash of arms we treasure our poet’s vision, and already we seem to hear

“A hundred nations swear that there shall be
Pity and Peace and Love among the good and free.”

May Christmas hasten that day. Peace on Earth is gone, but by renewal of our faith that it still reigns at the heart of things, Christmas should strengthen both you and us and all womanhood to strive for its return.

We are yours in this sisterhood of sorrow,
Rachel Lewis
Margaret Llewelyn Davies
Florence Luard
Clara C Lucas
Alice A Lucas
Frederick Mackarness (Mrs)
Jeanne Mitchell (Mrs)
Mary Morel (Mrs E D Morel)
Margaret Moscheles (Mrs Felix Moscheles)
Clara Moser
Nora O'Shea
Annie M Orchard (Mrs W E Orchard)
Kathleen Outhwaite (Mrs R L Outhwaite)
E Sylvia Pankhurst
Jessie Payne
P H Peckover
Dr. Marion Phillips (Gen. Sec., Women's Labour League)
C E Playne
Dorothea Posonby (Mrs)
Ada Prouse
Edith A Roberts
Annot E Robinson (Manchester)
Esther G Roper
Isabella A Rowntree (Mrs Joshua Rowntree)
A Maude Roydon
Ada Salter

C P Sanger (Mrs)
Mary H Saunders
“Constance Smedley” (Mrs Armfield)
Dorothy Smith (Manchester)
Norah L Smyth
Mary Stevens
Lily Sturge
Sophia Sturge
Maria L Swanson (late Hon. Sec. Darlington Branch National Union Women’s Suffrage Societies)
Thomasine A Swanson
H M Swanwick (Mrs Swanwick)
Hannah Maria Taylor
Josephine Thompson
Julie E Tomlinson (Knutsford’s Women’s Suffrage Society)
Mary Trevelyan (Mrs Charles Trevelyn)
Helena I Webb
Annie L White
Theodora M Wilson
A Burtt Woodhead
Annie B Woodhouse (Knutsford’s Women’s Suffrage Society)
Mary Wratten (Mrs)
Ann Yates (Manchester)