Resources for schools

Case study: Conscientious objectors in the First World War

Developing your skills for Higher History

National Library of Scotland
2014
Introduction
This resource is designed for students taking Higher History, 'The Impact of the Great War, 1914-1928'. It contains twelve primary sources drawn from the National Library of Scotland collections relating to the topic of conscientious objection and pacifism, and supports the study of the 'Domestic impact of war: society and culture'.

The resource aims to improve critical thinking, evaluation, and research skills using archive sources. You can also use the primary sources to support your extended essay, and to plan a class debate or discussion.

Paper 2: evaluating historical sources
The resource features twelve primary sources from the National Library of Scotland collections. These include postcards, letters, printed pamphlets and booklets, newspaper articles, and cartoons.

For each source, we have provided some information about the background and historical context, and also some prompt questions to help you to evaluate the possible purpose, content, and context of each item so that you can come to your own conclusions.

Extended essay
If you are interested in writing your extended essay on the theme of conscientious objection or recruitment and conscription, you might like to use the sources to support your arguments. Here is a breakdown of themes and sources within this resource:

Recruitment and conscription Sources 1 and 6
Reasons for claiming exemption / opposing the war Sources 2 and 7
Attitudes towards conscientious objectors Sources 1, 5, 6, and 10
No-conscription Fellowship Sources 2, 4, 7
Argument for exemption Sources 3, 4, and 5
Tribunal system Sources 3, 8, 9, and 12
Imprisonment and treatment of COs Source 4, 10, 11

Discussion and debate
You might also like to organise a class discussion or debate on the topic of conscientious objection, using the archive sources to support your argument as well as other secondary material suggested by your teacher.

Sources 3, 5 and 7 highlight the issue of whether individual conscience should take precedence over the requirements of Government, particularly at a time of war. You might like to use these three sources as a starting point to debate the following motion, perhaps in collaboration with students taking Modern Studies:
'The state should have the right to compel the individual to fight for their country, and to give up their life if necessary, in time of war.'

Further resources at the National Library of Scotland

The National Library of Scotland contains several archives relating to conscientious objectors (COs), including the following:

- Papers of Thomas Hannan, Acc.13388
- Copies of letters written by Eric Dott at Dartmoor, Acc. 8850
- Papers of Emrys Hughes, Dep.176
- Papers of Arthur Woodburn, Acc. 7656

For more information about these archives you can contact the manuscripts division at the National Library of Scotland at manuscripts@nls.uk.

You can also find contemporary printed material – such as leaflets, pamphlets, and posters – relating to this topic, as well as modern printed books.

There is more general information about Thomas Hannan on our 'Experiences of the Great War' web feature http://digital.nls.uk/great-war/
## Conscientious objection during the First World War: key dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 August 1914:</td>
<td>Outbreak of First World War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1914:</td>
<td>Friends Ambulance Unit (FAU) set up in France by group of young Quakers; most of its 1200 members were pacifists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1914:</td>
<td>The No-Conscription Fellowship established with 300 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1915:</td>
<td>Compulsory registration of men and women up to age 65 (census to assess total human resources, overseen by Lord Derby)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1915:</td>
<td>Results of census showed that almost five million men of military age were not in the Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 October 1915:</td>
<td>Introduction of the Derby Scheme – men were given the chance to enlist voluntarily or to ‘attest’ with an obligation to come if called up later on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1915:</td>
<td>First National Convention of the No-Conscription Fellowship held at the Memorial Hall, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 March 1916:</td>
<td>Compulsory conscription in Britain for all single men and childless widowers aged 18-41 years (Military Service Act 1916)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1916:</td>
<td>Creation of Non-Combatant Corps (NCC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1916:</td>
<td>Compulsory conscription extended to all married men aged 18-41 years in Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1916:</td>
<td>Introduction of Home Office Scheme – work camps set up by the Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 1918:</td>
<td>Armistice signed; recruiting under the Military Service Act suspended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1919:</td>
<td>The last conscientious objector (CO) released from prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 1919:</td>
<td>Final Convention of the No-Conscription Fellowship held at Devonshire House and attended by over 400 delegates; NCF disbanded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1920:</td>
<td>Last of the men demobilised from the NCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921:</td>
<td>Majority of tribunal records destroyed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Source 1: ‘Are you doing your share?’, recruitment leaflet, published by the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, March 1915

From the outbreak of war in August 1914 until the introduction of the Military Services Act in March 1916, there was a reliance on volunteers joining the Armed Forces. The need for more troops was addressed by a series of promotional campaigns, supported by the press.

The Parliamentary Recruiting Committee was established on 31 August 1914. This was a cross-party organisation, chaired by the Prime Minister, which was responsible for issuing and distributing promotional material encouraging voluntary enlistment.

- Does this source shed any light on attitudes towards conscientious objectors and pacifists after the outbreak of war? Compare the message conveyed in this leaflet with the postcards in source 6.
- What methods does this leaflet use to persuade men to volunteer for the Armed Forces?
- Drawing on recalled knowledge, think about the context of this leaflet – why was it important to send out this message at this particular time?

Source 2: ‘Manifesto issued by the No-Conscription Fellowship’, September 1915

The No-Conscription Fellowship (NCF) was formally established in November 1914 by Archibald Fenner Brockway (1888-1988), editor of the ‘Labour Leader’, the newspaper of the Independent Labour Party (ILP). Several months previously, he had published a letter in the ‘Labour Leader’ inviting all those who were not prepared to fight to enrol their names. Over 300 men responded, and formed the basis of the new organisation.

The initial aims of the NCF were to prevent the introduction of compulsory conscription and, later, to secure the inclusion of a ‘conscience clause’. This NCF manifesto was produced in August 1915 following the compulsory registration of all men and women under 65 years old. The census was designed to discover how many men of military age were in each trade and would be available to fight. The results, issued in September 1915, showed that there were almost five million males who were not in the Armed Forces, of which 1.6 million were in protected jobs. The census led to the Derby Scheme, or Group Scheme, in October 1915. Men could continue to enlist voluntarily or could ‘attest’, which involved an obligation to come if called up at a later date. This scheme was half-way to compulsory conscription, which was eventually established in March 1916.

- According to this source, what is the main reason for objecting to compulsory conscription on the grounds of conscience?
- What types of men are members of the NCF?
- What are NCF members prepared to do to serve their country?
- Much of the anti-CO material condemns the COs for being unpatriotic. What arguments are used in this source to counter that claim?
- What other arguments are outlined against compulsory conscription (in wider society, and by people who are not necessarily pacifists)?
This debate in the House of Commons took place six weeks before the introduction of compulsory conscription on 2 March 1916. Sir Charles Philips Trevelyan was a Liberal Government Minister who resigned his post in opposition to the war. He helped to set up the Union of Democratic Control, a pressure group opposed to military influence in Government, and he became the Union's principal advocate in the Commons.

Robert Leonard Outhwaite was a Liberal Government Minister and a pacifist. William Ellis Hume-Williams was a Conservative Government Minister.

- What is C P Trevelyan arguing for in this debate?
- What is the main concern of this source?
- How does C P Trevelyan propose treating 'shirkers' – those men who might use exemption or the conscience clause as an excuse for not fighting? How does he propose dealing with the widely held criticism that men will use the conscience clause as a way of avoiding their duty?
- Compare the argument for total exemption with that in Source 4 ('More than 1000 conscientious objectors'); to what extent do sources 3 and 4 agree?
- According to this source, what are some of the issues with the tribunal system for assessing whether a man has a legitimate reason for claiming conscience?

Source 4: 'More than one thousand conscientious objectors', propaganda leaflet produced by the No-Conscription Fellowship, 1916

The No-Conscription Fellowship (NCF) was formally established in November 1914 by Archibald Fenner Brockway (1888-1988), editor of the 'Labour Leader', the newspaper of the Independent Labour Party (ILP). Several months previously, he had published a letter in the 'Labour Leader' inviting all those who were not prepared to fight to enrol their names. Over 300 men responded, and formed the basis of the new organisation.

The initial aims of the NCF were to prevent the introduction of compulsory conscription and, later, to secure the inclusion of a 'conscience clause'. With the introduction of the Military Services Act in March 1916, the NCF organised hundreds of meetings across the UK and distributed leaflets promoting the principles of the Fellowship and highlighting the plight of conscientious objectors (COs). The organisation kept detailed records of all members, arranged to visit COs in prison, and brought a constant pressure to bear upon Parliament.

'Every opportunity was taken of drawing attention to the CO stand – whether by the publication of the facts regarding imprisonment and illegal and brutal treatment; by reports of Court Martial proceedings and Parliamentary questions and debates; or by the initiation of correspondence'.

['Souvenir booklet of the No-Conscription Fellowship, 1914-1919', page 25]

- What is the call to action expressed in this leaflet? What does this leaflet aim to achieve?
- According to this source, what values are being upheld by conscientious objectors and those who support their cause?
• How does the religious imagery reinforce the message and aims of the text?
• Find out what ‘Habeas Corpus’ means (written above the cross). How does this relate to the message and aims of the text?
• What is the impact of highlighting certain phrases in capital letters throughout the text? Why have these phrases been picked out as being of particular importance?
• Compare the argument for total exemption with that in Source 3.

Source 5: 'Treatment of conscientious objectors', letter published in 'The Scotsman' newspaper, 26 May 1916

This letter was published almost three months after the introduction of compulsory conscription, and concerns the attitude of the Free Church towards conscientious objectors.

• What is the general attitude towards conscientious objectors being expressed in this source?
• What does this source tell us about societal attitudes towards the question of 'individual conscience' at this time?
• Compare the arguments for and against total exemption expressed in this source and sources 3 and 4.

Source 6: Picture postcards, circa 1915

• What do these postcards reveal about the general attitude towards conscientious objectors and men who chose not to enlist at the start of the First World War?
• Why do you think that the characters are shown dressed in smart clothes?
• How far do these sources accord with the attitudes expressed in source 5?

Source 7: Extract from the ‘Souvenir Booklet of the No-Conscription Fellowship, 1914-1919’, published circa 1919, pages 12-13

This illustrated booklet describes the work of the No-Conscription Fellowship, and includes a series of essays on different aspects of the NCF’s work. This extract explores some of the reasons why men resisted conscription, and the differing attitudes to war.

• According to this source, what is the difference between the views held by the pacifists and those held by the socialists and the Trade Union Movement?
• What does this source tell us about the range of views and opinions held by conscientious objectors, and their reasons for resisting conscription?
• How far does this source accord with the earlier manifesto produced by the NCF, and the stated reasons for resisting compulsory conscription on the basis of conscience (source 2)?
**Source 8: Letter of testimonial relating to the tribunal of Thomas Hannan, Glasgow, written by the Superintendent of Maryhill Parish Church Sunday School, December 1916**

The Military Service Act 1916 included a 'conscience clause' which allowed men to claim exemption from military service on religious or moral grounds. Men who wanted to apply for exemption had to appear before a local tribunal – an interview panel with legal authority, made up of local councillors, businessmen, labour representatives, lawyers and magistrates. If applicants were not satisfied with the type of exemption awarded to them, they could apply to a regional appeal tribunal which, in turn, could refer the case to the Central Tribunal based in London.

Most of the official tribunal records were destroyed in 1921, but some Scottish records relating to the regional appeal tribunals are held at the National Records of Scotland and can be viewed online: [http://www.nas.gov.uk/about/081103.asp](http://www.nas.gov.uk/about/081103.asp)

Thomas Hannan (1879–1941) was from Maryhill, Glasgow, and applied for exemption on moral grounds. He was a socialist and had long held anti-war views. This letter was written in support of his claim for exemption at the local tribunal in Glasgow. It is one of four testimonials in the Thomas Hannan papers at the National Library of Scotland which were written by members of the local community, and which attest to Thomas Hannan's character and long-held beliefs.

You can find out more about Thomas Hannan on the 'Experiences of the Great War' web feature [http://digital.nls.uk/great-war/](http://digital.nls.uk/great-war/)

- According to this source, what were Thomas Hannan's main reasons for applying for exemption under the 'conscience clause'? How do his reasons tie in with those outlined in sources 2 and 7?
- How persuasive is this letter?
- Why might Thomas Hannan have asked a Sunday School Superintendent to write this letter?

**Source 9: Extract from Hansard, the official edited report of proceedings of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, 22 March 1916, House of Commons Hansard, George V year 6, 165-346, Fifth Series, Volume 81.**

This debate took place in the House of Commons three weeks after the introduction of compulsory conscription on 2 March 1916. Mr Philip Morrell (1870-1943) was a Liberal MP and, along with Sir Charles Trevelyan (see Source 3) was a founding member of the Union of Democratic Control, a pressure group opposed to military influence in Government.

- What is the main concern of this source?
- According to Mr Morrell MP, what is wrong with the tribunal system? What examples does he give of it not working as effectively as it should?
- How does he propose that conscientious objectors should be treated, and why?

**Source 10: Letter written by Thomas Hannan to his father, William Hannan, from Princetown Work Centre (formerly known as Dartmoor Prison), 1917**


Thomas Hannan (1879-1941) was a conscientious objector from Maryhill, Glasgow, who applied for exemption on moral grounds. He was a socialist and had long held anti-war views. He was imprisoned in Wormwood Scrubs, but later sent to Princetown Work Centre (formerly Dartmoor Prison) as part of the Home Office Scheme.

In this letter, Thomas Hannan writes a response to his father who did not support his anti-war stance.

- What can this source tell us about tensions within families and communities resulting from different attitudes towards war?
- What reasons does Thomas Hannan give for not wanting to fight?
- Compare Thomas Hannan's description of life in prison with sources 4 and 11.

Source 11: Cartoon 'The CO in prison', from 'The News Sheet', number 14, issued by the No-Conscription Fellowship, 1917

The majority of men who applied for exemption on grounds of 'conscience' were refused, and many were conscripted into the Army. Those who refused to obey military orders and discipline were court-martialled and had to serve a sentence in a civilian prison varying from a few months to two years. Once in prison, conscientious objectors were subject to the regime experienced by ordinary criminals. On release from prison, the conscientious objector would be handed back to the military, and often the whole cycle would begin again. About 6000 men were imprisoned in total.

In July 1916, the Home Office Scheme was introduced which gave conscientious objectors the option to leave prison and to work at labour camps in different parts of the country. One of these camps was located at Dyce, Aberdeenshire. Thomas Hannan (see sources 8 and 10) was sent to the Princetown Work Centre, formerly Dartmoor Prison.

'The News Sheet', produced by the No-Conscription Fellowship, was issued to men employed under the Home Office Scheme camps and work centres. This cartoon was created by G D Micklewright in 1917.

- What does this source tell us about the treatment of conscientious objectors in prison?
- Compare this cartoon with source 4 which describes the harsh treatment of conscientious objectors.

Source 12: Letter to Thomas Hannan from the Central Tribunal, 28 June 1917

After August 1916, conscientious objectors who were in prison were given the option to have their case reviewed by the Central Tribunal in London. If their reasons for wanting exemption were found to be genuine, the conscientious objector was offered work in a labour centre or labour camp under the Home Office Scheme.

When this letter was written, Thomas Hannan, a conscientious objector from Glasgow, was in prison at Wormwood Scrubs, but he later went to a work camp at Dartmoor.

- According to this source, what options were open to conscientious objectors at this time?
A REASON—or an EXCUSE?

In the Great War
(the greatest there has ever been)

Are YOU doing
YOUR SHARE?

IF NOT, WHY NOT?

Perhaps you have what you think is a
REASON for not joining the Army.
Are you QUITE SURE it is not an
EXCUSE?

THINK IT OVER. Every fit man of military age
who can be spared is wanted for the Great New Army.

The time to enlist is
not next week, or some time later on, but

NOW! AT ONCE!!
MANIFESTO
ISSUED BY THE
NO-CONSCRIPTION FELLOWSHIP

The case for and against compulsory military and munition service is being argued by many who, for reasons of age or sex, would not be subject to it. The signatories to this Manifesto think it imperative to voice a protest in the name of a large body of men in this country who, though able-bodied and of military age, will—in the event of coercive measures—be bound by deep conscientious conviction to decline these services, whatever the consequences of refusal.

We yield to no one in our admiration of the self-sacrifice, the courage and the unflagging devotion of those of our fellow-countrymen who have felt it their duty to take up arms. Nevertheless, we cannot undertake the same form of service; our conviction is solemn and unalterable.

Whatever the purpose to be achieved by war, however high the ideals for which belligerent nations may struggle, for us ‘Thou shalt not kill’ means what it says. The destruction of our fellow-men—young men like ourselves—appalls us; we cannot assist in the cutting off of one generation from life’s opportunities. Insistence upon individual obligations in the interests of national well-being has no terrors for us; we gladly admit—we would even extend—the right of the community to impose duties upon its members for the common good, but we deny the right of any Government to make the slaughter of our fellows a bounden duty.

We have been brought to this standpoint by many ways. Some of us have reached it through the Christian faith in which we have been reared, and to our interpretation of which we plead the right to stand loyal. Others have found it by association with international movements; we believe in the solidarity of the human race, and we cannot betray the ties of brotherhood which bind us to one another throughout the nations of the world.

All of us, however we may have come to this conviction, believe in the value and sacredness of human personality, and are prepared to sacrifice as much in the cause of the world’s peace as our fellows are sacrificing in the cause of the nation’s war.

Believing it is the imperative duty of every citizen to serve his country, we are eager to render national service through such occupations as shall help to build up the life and strength of our country without inflicting loss on that of other people.

We have not emphasised the objections to Conscription which are widely held by many who do not share our views on war. There are many who are now exposing the folly of forced service from the military standpoint; there is the vast body of Trade Unionists who view with suspicion the agitation of the National Service League and the Conscriptor Press, and see in it a menace to the working class; there are experts who demonstrate that the revolution entailed would undermine the financial and commercial stability which is not the least valuable asset this country offers to the Allied Powers; there are the advocates of national unity who for that reason alone deplore the raising of so disruptive an issue; and finally there are those whose objections are held on the ground of the great traditions and liberties of our country.

We, too, recognise to the full the grave dangers to those liberties and those traditions in the present agitation for Conscription, and especially as it must affect the workers of the nation, but first and foremost our decision rests on the ground of the serious violation of moral and religious convictions which a system of compulsion must involve.

We believe the real inspiration that prompts all efforts towards progress is a desire that human life may become of more account. This ideal we cannot renounce; its claim is absolute.

(Signed)
CLIFFORD ALLEN, Chairman.
EDWARD GRUBB, Hon. Treasurer.
A. FENNER BROCKWAY, Hon. Secretary.
A. BARRATT BROWN
A. SUTHERLAND CAMPBELL
W. J. CHAMBERLAIN
J. H. HUDSON
MORGAN JONES
C. H. NORMAN
LEYTON RICHARDS (REV.)

Committee.

Merton House,
Salisbury Square,
London, E.C.
September, 1915.
Mr. Hume-Williams: Does the hon. Gentleman really mean, if a man says he does not approve of the War, that therefore he is to be treated as a conscientious objector and exempted?

Mr. Trevelyan: Certainly not. There are many people who, like myself, object to the War very much, but who are not conscientious objectors. There are other people whose dislike of and disbelief in the War does make them conscientious objectors to fighting. I cannot, nor can you nor can anybody else, tell what is working in a man’s mind. You cannot tell what is making him a conscientious objector. In most cases it is a mixture of all these things; it is a mixture of a dislike of war and of a strongly religious temperament very likely, but the question for the House is not what makes the man have a conscientious objection, but how he is going to act. That is the point for the Government, and I suggest that the simple way out of the difficulty is to say that if a man has a conscientious objection he ought to be able to claim complete exemption. That is the simplest way out, and the Government will not lose very many men. Really, the phraseology of the Bill as it stands is almost impossible. There is a military service or local tribunal which, if it thinks it just in the circumstances, may grant a certificate. How can conscientious objection be just in the circumstances of one man and be unjust in the circumstances of another man? Who is to tell except the man himself? The only judge of a man’s conscience is the man himself. To put it under a local tribunal is to deny the individual conscience. The thing is really absurd, and I am bound to say that I wish the Government would do the simple thing and let these men off if they want to go.
MORE THAN ONE THOUSAND CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS HAD BEEN TAKEN INTO CUSTODY BY JUNE 9th. ARRESTS ARE NOW PROCEEDING AT THE RATE OF ABOUT ONE HUNDRED & FIFTY A WEEK

Of the twelve hundred and sixty men already arrested, the vast majority are now suffering punishment of terms of detention, imprisonment, hard labour, solitary confinement; some have been put in irons, others sentenced to Field Punishment No. I,* a barbarity superseding the cat-o'-nine-tails. That is a rough record of the official punishment. The unofficial has consisted of kicking, head-beating, and personal violence in general. Yet less than 4% of the arrested men have given way before this treatment; and even in the case of these, their lack of endurance by no means implies a lack of conscience. The conscientious determination of this handful of men has already thrown the military machine out of gear. Officers are harassed, discipline is publicly

* "Where an offender is sentenced to Field Punishment No. I, he may, during the continuance of his sentence, unless the court-martial or the commanding officer otherwise directs, be punished as follows:—

(a) He may be kept in irons—i.e., in letters or handcuffs, or both fetters and handcuffs; and may be secured so as to prevent his escape.

(b) When in irons he may be attached for a period or periods not exceeding two hours in any one day to a fixed object, but he must not be so attached during more than three out of any four consecutive days, nor during more than twenty-one days in all.

(c) Straps or ropes may be used for the purpose of these rules in lieu of irons." Extract from the Army Act, Section 44.
defied, guard-rooms are full, a small army of military escorts and gaolers is occupied in looking after the objectors, and the doctrines of brotherhood, of passive resistance, of internationalism, are being preached and practised everywhere. One thousand men have done this: AND THERE ARE MANY OTHER THOUSANDS gradually “ripening” for arrest. One Society alone has fifteen thousand members, and there are probably four conscientious objectors outside it for every one within it. What if all these have an equal determination not to betray their most sacred convictions? Through the action of the Government and the Tribunals every camp in the country will soon be a centre of pacifist propaganda.

To a man they are expecting to suffer, and are prepared to suffer. The isolation, the contumely of the past year has been their initiation. BUT ARE YOU PREPARED TO ALLOW THEM TO BE PERSECUTED FOR THEIR FAITH? Not for their sake as much as for your own and for the country’s the Government must be compelled to respect conscience, and to give these men that relief which the Military Service Act provides, and which alone they can accept—total exemption.

TREATMENT AFTER ARREST

As everybody now knows, the fate of a man before the Tribunals is governed, not by justice, but by the sheerest and most capricious chance. Just as every Tribunal has a different idea both of a conscience and of its own powers under the Act, so every kind of temper is displayed by the Officers Commanding at different camps. At Kinmel Park, for instance, an objector was addressed thus: “You’re one of those damned conscientious objectors. You damned compulsory swine. Christ Almighty!” The temper of this officer and gentleman was well translated into kicks and cuffs by his subordinates. From Wandsworth Prison in particular have come independent and corroborative reports of scandalous brutalities. It is scarcely possible to imagine the frame of mind that would allow an Officer Commanding to encourage such things; but the Commandant at Wandsworth has indulged in a little self-revelation. A letter which ended with the following words was sent by a friend to a C.O. in his charge: “Of course there are scandalous cases like that of Rendall Wyatt, who was kept handcuffed in a dark cell and then sent to France with the N.C.C.” The letter came back endorsed thus: “Letter returned. Not of the sort I will pass. If your news as to Private Rendall Wyatt is true I am delighted to hear it, and sincerely hope the whole lot of the N.C.C.’s will be treated in the same way.—Reginald Brooke, Lt.-Col.-Commandant.” On the other hand, the Colonel in charge of the objectors at Shoreham “says he would like to send us back to civil life, but he can’t.” “First at Mill Hill,” reports another man. “Rough treatment. Then to Shoreham, where treatment is very good, consisting of friendly coaxing. Treatment very hard to bear!”
A FEW CASES OF OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL PUNISHMENT: “The sergeant handcuffed us together. He endeavoured to get us to carry our kits, but, we refusing, they were tied round our necks. . . . We started on our journey, handcuffed together, with our kits nearly choking us, marching—or, I should say, stumbling—through the streets. . . . At Kingston, I am sorry to say, Albert partially collapsed, and had to fall on his knees to relieve the pressure on his throat from the string of the kit-bag. Consequently I, being handcuffed to him, had to get on the ground also. Well, after being both on the ground for about ten minutes, the train came in, so they lifted our packs off our backs. . . . On arrival here our handcuffs were opened, after a period of over 14 hours.”—(Letter from a Kingston conscientious objector now in Edinburgh.)

A. G. McDougall refused to put on khaki. He was seized and his head banged down on a table. He was removed to Salisbury, and he fainted on the way from the station to the camp. He refused to parade, and was given detention. Refused again, and sent to a military gaol, where he was for part of the time in solitary confinement on bread and water. On his release he was ordered to do bombing practice, refused, was court-martialled and sentenced to four months’ hard labour. At the beginning of the war he proved his sincerity by resigning his work at Scotland Yard because he felt he could not remain in the employment of a Government which was waging war.

D. S. Parkes, on refusing to obey orders, was told that he would be shot at dawn. In the morning a rifle was loaded in his presence, a soldier was ordered to fire, and then he was told that he had been pardoned.

Daniel Huxstep, Salvation Army officer, refused to put on khaki. He was forcibly stripped naked, and remained so for three days in his cell. After this treatment and two summary sentences he was still able to write that he was “quite happy.” Then began a system of petty violence so severe that he writes “I have been bullied and coaxed until I am sick . . . I feel only those who are prepared for death will persevere.” Finally, he was court-martialled; and the presiding officer afterwards stated that his conduct “could have only one result—the death sentence.” The Salvation Army Adjutant gives him a very high character; and his employer (a fruit farmer) writes: “Very straightforward and good in every way. He is highly sensitive, and it must be a real martyrdom.”

At Chatham three brothers named Walker, another objector named Hughes (the victims), and a private, who is a stranger to them, give corroborative evidence. (Foretelling a possible new clause in the Defence of the Realm Act, their Bibles were forbidden these men in the cells.)

From a letter of Fred Walker: “Very bad treatment; bullying, punching, bending arms, etc., etc. . . . three officers saw it all; in fact, Charles heard Captain Williams tell a chap to ‘smack him across the mouth if he won’t obey.’”
TREATMENT OF CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS.

ATTITUDE OF FREE CHURCH COUNCIL.

The Committee of the National Free Church Council, at a special meeting held in London yesterday, decided to address a letter to the Prime Minister regarding the treatment of conscientious objectors. The letter, which is signed by the Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, President, and Dr F. B. Meyer and Dr Scott Lidgett, hon. secretaries, says:—The Committee is gravely disturbed by the persistent reports that men who have pleaded conscientious objection to military service have been harshly and unjustifiably treated when they have appeared before the Tribunal, and many have been handed over to the military authorities. Hundreds of thousands of Free Churchmen, in obedience to conscience, have joined the Army, but the Committee, believing in the inviolable sanctity of conscience and its sovereign authority, cannot treat lightly the plea advanced in the name of conscience when, as in the present instance, it is used as a reason for not undertaking military service.” The letter adds:—“We cannot admit that the individual has a moral right to decline his part in the task and the burden of the community, or to expect the advantages conferred by the State while refusing to share in its responsibilities, nor can we view without grave concern the claim alleged by some on conscientious grounds to be relieved from every kind of service to the nation.” The letter points out that the Military Service Act provides that a reasonable concession shall be made to genuine conscientious objectors, and urges the Government to take steps to ensure that the law is carried out, and suggests proposals to meet the case of objectors.
"This little pig stayed at home."

"The problem of today.
"Shall I join the Army or shall I cultivate a cough?"

Qu'attend-on pour appeler ma classe?
developed among the resisters, though over and over again these currents cross and re-cross.

There are those who lay particular stress upon the need of making the world see that the method of war is directly opposed to those ideas of mutual responsibility between men upon which the future of mankind depends. They agree that in consequence of existing international policies certain wars may appear, under present conditions, to be less evil than others. On the other hand, they argue that it is necessary for some minority to emphasise a higher estimate of the value of human life and a greater sense of respect by men for each other if we are to develop a mood which will overthrow the policies which now result in war. This minority must always refuse to engage in war, however just a particular war may seem. Such people are generally termed Pacifists.

The other group resist Conscription without being able to form a final opinion as to whether war should, under all circumstances, be abstained from. Though not convinced upon this point, they are nevertheless clear that it is essential that men should be free to decide for themselves whether in time of war they will offer their lives to the Community or inflict death. Although this may seem to be a very individualistic outlook, it is none the less true that this view is held by a substantial number of Socialists. They realise that one at least of the ways of reducing the chances of war is for public opinion to agree that engaging in war is something that cannot be compelled by the State. They argue that a State is an organ of administration rather than dominion, whose business it is to organise the life of the Community in such a way that the dignity and status of the individual are constantly raised. They agree that the interests of the Community are of far greater importance than
those of the citizen, but they would never concede to the State the right to estimate the individual as of so little importance as to compel him to give up his life. They believe that to concede this right to the State in time of war will lead the Community to under-value the worth of the individual in time of peace, so that poverty and industrial slavery will be tolerated. On the other hand they maintain that if the Community denies the right of the State to compel the extinction of the individual in time of war, it will also refuse in time of peace to acquiesce in poverty and class oppression, because these depend upon false views of the value and dignity of human life. In other words, the Conscientious Objector has expressed the new ideals of the Trade Union Movement, which places the status of Labour in the forefront of its programme.
3, John Street,
Maryhill.
December, 1916.

To whom it may concern

I hereby certify to have known the said Thomas Hannan
for about fifteen years and can testify that during the
past twelve years he has held his present views i.e. "Peace
and the Brotherhood of Man". He is entirely against the
taking up of Arms against his fellowman and believes that
peace could be secured by mutual agreement, while I am entirely
against Mr. Hannan's views believing that the present is a
just war. I sincerely believe him to be a truly conscientious
objector.

Yours respectfully,

[Signature]

Superintendent.
that is being brought against these tribunals on that head, and that it is a matter which does deserve the attention of the Government. I am not myself in any sense one of those who hold conscientious objections to war. At the beginning of the War I applied for a commission, but being forty-six years of age, and having no previous experience, I was considered unfit. I have taken part in recruiting meetings, and have done my best to get recruits on many occasions since the beginning of the War. Although I do not hold their views, from inquiries I have made I am convinced that these men have a very real right to a grievance as to the way in which they are being treated in a very large number of cases in all parts of the country by these tribunals. After all, these men are not criminals, they are not acting in any illegal way, but they are bringing forward a claim which they have a perfect right to bring forward. They are claiming a right which this House has given them by Act of Parliament, and I submit that they ought to be treated, I will not say merely with more respect, but with more consideration and more justice than they are now being treated by these local tribunals. If the right hon. Gentleman will make inquiries, I believe he will find a large number of cases in all parts of the country where the tribunals are treating the conscientious objectors in a way which no fair-minded man could possibly approve. In many cases they are treating them with studied insult, they are refusing to hear their cases patiently, and in some cases refusing to hear them at all. They are acting illegally by telling the men they have no right to appeal, where in fact they have that right, and they are not merely giving decisions against the weight of evidence, but they are refusing these claims for exemption on grounds which are obviously unfair and unjust. The hon. Member for Blackburn has given a great many instances. I do not intend to weary the House by giving a long string of further instances, although I could do so and have a very large number of cases here in my hand. I can give them to the right hon. Gentleman to satisfy him of the truth of what I say, that in a very large number of cases the tribunals are not acting fairly, or in any just or judicial spirit towards these men.

There is a case here of a man who was brought before a tribunal on 9th March. He was at the moment out of work. He
had just lost his job, and was looking out for another. He was a conscientious objector opposed utterly to all war. What did the chairman say?

“Oh, we will soon get him some work. I dismiss the case.”

He did not give him a hearing of any kind. In another case, before the same tribunal, Harry Ward, a clerk, applied for exemption on grounds of conscience. The hearing occupied two and a half minutes. The applicant was not allowed to state his case or to call witnesses. These are the chairman’s words as I am informed, and I believe correctly. He could not take the responsibility of exempting him on conscientious grounds. The chairman was there in order to carry out an Act of Parliament, and not to give his own views. It is a monstrous thing that you should have the very forms of the law set aside by tribunals created by this House and under the authority, at any rate to some extent, of this House. I shall be very much disappointed if the right hon. Gentleman takes the same attitude that he did yesterday and practically refuses to take any action with a view to getting the law administered properly by these tribunals.
Dear Father,

I received your letter with mixed feelings. Some parts of it were hardly understandable to me. I quite frankly criticized your conduct which at a time like this is insensible. Your long life has been one of indulgence and whether conscious or unconscious if you have allowed selfishness to run just with what are good intentions you may have had to do this has always been a regret which at times was tinged with bitterness when I thought of what might have been.

My Mother and I need all the sympathy you could give, instead of being a source of strength in this awful time in their lives you seem to have been a source of weakness and humiliation. I put it to you that is not playing the game. Nevertheless I have enough of the Bunsen Philosophy to "Gently read my Father men" and you may always find the door of my heart ajar when all others are closed. I assure you I have no thoughts of Martyrdom to me that is all.
sentimental nuzzle. I am only one of a determined minority who want the browbeater, being in the minority, I have endeavored to take my punishment as would my "Worthy Grandfather" of happy memory. At present I am working harder and longer hours than did my predecessors, in needed darkness and on less food. But I would not have it otherwise, the road to freedom lies through prison. Those long weeks of solitary confinement when a man is thrown back on his own thoughts when every little mistake and error in his past life turns and nears his very soul. Happy, happy is the man who in those soul-searching hours can look back on a blameless life. Oh, that the Helms, Bannerman, Carson, Hamilton, Coss and Haisan could have a few more solitary confinements to reflect on the past. I appreciate the last of your letter, wherein you express the hope that none of your grandchildren will ever be involved. I so want that I am this, but if fate were otherwise I am hopeful that my boy will to his teaching will act. 
example to others. As I write you this, things outside seem in a turmoil. The workers all over look like fighting over the trees and every country is trying to keep their own people in order. It is not such a tragedy as it would appear. The United States would play the same with such tyranny, isn't it? It looks as if they will have to withdraw all the troops to keep their own people in order. Well, father, I trust matters will go better at home so earnestly do I wish that. That all my letters have at all times that in view. Give my regards to all at home.

Your Affectionate Son,

If the world is going wrong
Who's to blame?
If the root of evil's strong
Where the shame?
How I stood out from the fight?
Never helped the cause of right?
Nothing done to spread the light?
Minor the shame.
Dear Father

I received your letter with mixed feeling. Some parts of it were hardly understandable to me. I quite openly criticised your conduct which at a time like this is inexcusable. Your long life has been one of indulgence and whether conscious or unconscious of it you have allowed selfishness to run riot with what ever good intentions you may have had. To me this has always been a regret which at times was tinged with bitterness when I thought of what might have been. My mother and Ria needed all the sympathy you could give, instead of being a source of strength at this awful period in their lives your seem to have been a source of weakness and humiliation. I put it to you that is not playing the game. Nevertheless I have enough of the Burns philosophy to 'gently scan my brither man' and you may always find the door of my heart ajar when all others are closed. I assure you I have no thoughts of martyrdom, to me that is all

sentimental piffle. I am only one of a determined minority who won't be browbeaten. Being the minority I have endeavoured to take my punishment as would my 'Worthy Grandfather' of happy memory. At present I am working harder and longer hours than did my predecessors in dreaded Dartmoor and on less food. But I would not have it otherwise. The road to freedom lies through prison. Those long weeks of solitary confinement when a man is thrown back on his own thoughts when every little mistake and error in his past life burns and sears his very soul. Happy, happy is the man who in those soul searching hours can look back on a blameless life. Oh that the Cursons, Hollwegs, Csars and Kaisers could have a few weeks solitary confinement to reflect on the past. I appreciated the last of your letter best wherein you express the hope that none of your grandsons will ever be involved. It is to prevent that I am here, but if fate decree otherwise I am hopeful that my boy true to his backing will set an example to others. As I write you things outside seem in a ferment. The workers all over look like kicking over the truces and every country is trying to keep their own people in order if it were such a tragedy a humourist would play the duce with such topsy turvy inconsistence. It looks as if they require to withdraw all the troops to keep their own people in order. Well father I trust matters will go better at home so earnestly do I wish that that all my letters have at all time that in view. Give my kind regards to all at home

Your affect son

Tom

If the world is going wrong
Who's to blame?
If the host of evils strong
Where the shame?
Have I stood out from the fight?
Never helped the cause of right?
Nothing done to speed the light?
Mine's the blame.
Sir,

I am desired by the Central Tribunal to inform you that your case has been sent to them by the Army Council in order that the tribunal may determine, in the light of the information which may now be available, whether you have a conscientious objection to military service based on religious or moral grounds.

Members of the Central Tribunal will attend at Wormwood Scrubs Prison at an early date, when an opportunity will be given to you of being heard by them as to your conscientious objection.

If you do not avail yourself of the opportunity of being heard or if, after having been heard, the Central Tribunal are not satisfied that you have a conscientious objection to military service based on religious or moral grounds, the Central Tribunal are informed that after the completion of your sentence you will be returned to the control of the military authorities.

If, on the other hand, after consideration of your case the Tribunal are satisfied that you have a conscientious objection to military service based on religious or moral grounds, your case will be sent to the civil Committee which has been appointed by the Home Office, in order that you may be placed on civil work under civil control and under conditions to be determined by that Committee, and when you take up work you will be transferred to Section W. of the Army Reserve, whereupon you will cease to be subject to military discipline and the Army Act, as also to draw pay from Army funds. You will be allowed to continue at civil work so long as your conduct is satisfactory to the Committee. If you should fail to comply with the conditions laid down by the Committee, you will be sent back to prison to undergo the remainder of your sentence and at the termination of the sentence you will be recalled from Section W. of the Army Reserve and returned to your unit when you will again be fully subject to military discipline and the Army Act.

Yours faithfully,

For Central Tribunal.

Private Thomas Mannan
(Prin No. 4072)