

U DCO Records of the No Conscription Fellowship 1916-1968
(Willesden Branch)

Historical Background:

The No Conscription Fellowship (NCF) was founded by Fenner Brockway after the outbreak of war in 1914 to organise opposition to conscription amongst men of military age. It was an explicitly pacifist organisation and its members committed themselves to 'refuse from conscientious motives to bear arms, because they consider[ed] human life too sacred'.

Membership reached 10,000 at its peak, two thirds of whom were members of the Independent Labour Party; the next largest group were Quakers. The National Committee was also dominated by young ILP activists, including Clifford Allen, Morgan Jones and James Hindle Hudson (who later became a Quaker), and the treasurer was the Quaker Edward Grubb. The introduction of conscription in 1916 transformed its political prospects and the Fellowship became 'the acknowledged voice of the whole conscientious objection movement' (Martin Ceadel).

Its role expanded to include provision of information and welfare services for its members, many of whom were imprisoned during 1916-1918. The Records Department of the NCF, which kept detailed information on the cases of every known conscientious objector, was later renamed the Conscientious Objectors Information Bureau (COIB). The NCF worked closely with the Friends Service Committee and the Fellowship of Reconciliation, through the Joint Advisory Council. The movement went underground following state harassment and was wound up in November 1919 after the release of the last conscientious objectors.

Some NCF members were involved in the formation of the No More War Movement in 1921 its counterpart during the Second World War was the No Conscription League, but this in contrast had little impact.

Custodial history:

Donated by Miss Gladys Gellett, through David Rubinstein, University of Hull, 13 March 1968

Description:

These case files contain letters sent by conscientious objectors to other branch members and to their friends and families, as well as statements made to military service tribunals. The national series of NCF case files survives amongst the papers of Catherine Marshall, its secretary.

Arrangement:

- U DCO/1-43 Case files relating to individual conscientious objectors, 1916-1917
- U DCO/44 General file relating to conscientious objectors, 1916-1919
- U DCO/45 List of papers, 1968
- U DCO/46 Related correspondence, 1968

Extent: 0.5 linear metres

Related material:

- Correspondence and journal of Robin Page Arnot as a conscientious objector [U DAR/2]
- Papers of P Smith relating to pacifism and conscientious objection [U DX/76]
- Correspondence of Frank and Myfanwy Westrope during Frank's imprisonment as a conscientious objector [U DX/135]

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Other repositories:

Papers of Catherine Marshall, secretary of NCF, Cumbria Record Office: Carlisle Headquarters [GB 0023]

Records of Manchester and Hythe branches of NCF, Working Class Movement Library

Scrap book of Thomas H Ellison, NCF member, Working Class Movement Library

No-Conscription Fellowship Collected Records, 1914-1920 [Ref CDG-B Great Britain] held by the Swarthmore College Peace Collection in Pennsylvania, USA

Access conditions:

Access will be granted to any accredited reader

U DCO/1	<p>Fred J Ballard File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Fred J Ballard, who was based/imprisoned at Mill Hill Barracks.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Pacifist. Writes about the reasons why others have chosen to conscientiously object, i.e. mentions that he is imprisoned with socialists, Christians & absolutists. 1 file</p>	Oct 1916- Feb 1917
U DCO/2	<p>William Barker File. Correspondence and other papers relating to William Barker who was based/imprisoned at Mill Hill Barracks. Royal Fusiliers Dover. H.M. Prison Canterbury.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Pacifist, he also refuses to wear khaki uniform. 1 file</p>	May 1916- Aug 1917
U DCO/3	<p>Thomas Bazeley File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Thomas Bazeley who was based/imprisoned at Lewes Civil Prison. Shoreham Camp. Seaford Barracks.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was an Absolutist, and had strong religious principles. Contains Court Martial statement. 1 file</p>	May 1916- Sep 1917

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U DCO/4	<p>George C Bolam File. Correspondence and other papers relating to George C Bolam who was based/imprisoned at No. 2 Camp, Sutton Veney, Warminster. Winchester Prison. Exeter Prison.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Christian, file contains Court Martial statement. 1 file</p>	<p>Nov 1916- Oct 1917</p>
U DCO/5	<p>Arthur E Burberry File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Arthur E Burberry who was based/imprisoned at Shoreham Camp. Mill Hill Barracks. Lewes Prison.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Christian 1 file</p>	<p>May-Jun 1918</p>
U DCO/6	<p>RW Chittam File. Contains just two copies of the same letter relating to RW Chittam who was based/imprisoned at Mill Hill Barracks.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Pacifist. 1 file</p>	<p>15 May 1916</p>
U DCO/7	<p>Kennard Coysh File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Kennard Coysh who was based/imprisoned at Mill Hill Barracks. Lower Barracks, Chatham. Chelmsford Detention Barracks.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Pacifist, file includes vivid descriptions of conditions in different prisons. 1 file</p>	<p>May-Jul 1916</p>
U DCO/8	<p>Sydney Coysh File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Sydney Coysh who was based/imprisoned at Shoreham Camp. Lewes Detention Barracks. Lewes Prison. Road Board Camp, Denton, Newhaven, Sussex.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Pacifist, he describes meeting with a member of the Society of Friends. 1 file</p>	<p>Jun-Sep 1916</p>

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U DCO/9	<p>R H Creasey File. Correspondence and other papers relating to R H Creasey who was based/imprisoned at Mill Hill Barracks.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Socialist, file contains Court Martial statement and that he believed war was waged in the interest of the capitalist workers is detrimental to the workers. 1 file</p>	<p>Nov 1916- Apr 1917</p>
U DCO/10	<p>James Darling File. Correspondence and other papers relating to James Darling who was based/imprisoned at Sutton Mandeville Camp.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Pacifist. He mentions the months of struggle and the ebb and flow of spiritual forms. 1 file</p>	<p>Oct-Nov 1916</p>
U DCO/11	<p>Norman R Elliott File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Norman R Elliott who was based/imprisoned at Tunbridge Wells Barracks. Wormwood Scrubs Prison. Purfleet Camp.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Christian and Absolutist he refused all military . 1 file</p>	<p>Jul 1916- Mar 1917</p>
U DCO/12	<p>Fred D Fitzgerald File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Fred D Fitzgerald who was based/imprisoned at Lower Barracks, Chatham. Mill Hill Barracks. Chelmsford Detention Barracks.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Pacifist. Includes a letter by Phyllis Fitzgerald which mentions a friend who has 'given in and joined the 2/9 Middlesex'. 1 file</p>	<p>Jul 1916- Jan 1918</p>
U DCO/13	<p>Stanley M Fulford File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Stanley M Fulford who was based/imprisoned at Mill Hill Barracks. Shoreham Camp. Lewes Prison.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Pacifist, he was in the Non Combatant Corps of the 16th R.F. Happy Valley Shoreham but refused to take part of anything that is of a military nature. 1 file</p>	<p>May-Sep 1916</p>

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| U DCO/14 | <p>George Gascoyne
File. Correspondence and other papers relating to George Gascoyne who was based/imprisoned at Mill Hill Barracks. Wandsworth Prison.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Pacifist, includes a letter dated 4 Jun 1917 about public opinion regarding C.O.s.
1 file</p> | Sep 1916-
Jan 1917 |
| U DCO/15 | <p>William (Billy) Giles
File. Correspondence and other papers relating to William (Billy) Giles who was based/imprisoned with the 2/12 Battalion London Regiment, Longbridge Deverill, Warminster, Wiltshire. Wandsworth Prison.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Christian and was in trouble for refusing to wear khaki.
1 file</p> | Nov 1916-
Apr 1917 |
| U DCO/16 | <p>Charles W Gooding
File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Charles W Gooding who was based/imprisoned at 3rd Suffolk Regiment, Felixtowe. Wormwood Scrubs Prison.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Pacifist. With a possible example of censorship in letter dated 9 Dec 1917, in which certain words have been scrubbed out.
1 file</p> | Dec 1917 |
| U DCO/17 | <p>Gilbert Hanson
File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Gilbert Hanson who was based/imprisoned at Mill Hill Barracks. Shoreham Cam. Royal Barracks, Dublin. Lewes Prison.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Absolutist/humanist. Includes table showing the daily diet of different classes of prisoner.
1 file</p> | May 1916-
Dec 1917 |
| U DCO/18 | <p>George W Henry
File. Correspondence and other papers relating to George W Henry who was based/imprisoned at Road Board Camp, Denton, Newhaven, Sussex. Shoreham Camp. Lewes Prison.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Pacifist.
1 file</p> | May 1916-
Jul 1917 |

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U DCO/19	<p>Harry J Hovell File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Harry J Hovell who was based/imprisoned at Marne Barracks North. City of London Rifles, Flovan, near Salisbury. Winchester Prison.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Pacifist and was considering becoming a Quaker (see letter dated 10 May 1917). 1 file</p>	<p>Jul 1916- May 1917</p>
U DCO/20	<p>Ronald Kent File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Ronald Kent who was based/imprisoned at Mill Hill Barracks. Lower Barracks, Chatham.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Christian. 1 file</p>	<p>May 1916</p>
U DCO/21	<p>Charles Littlefield File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Charles Littlefield who was based/imprisoned at Felixstowe. Ipswich Civil Prison. Wormwood Scrubs.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Absolutist/Socialist. He was a teacher in the Socialist Sunday School Movement. Statement says he believes in the principles of humanity and love. 1 file</p>	<p>Jun 1916- Jul 1917</p>
U DCO/22	<p>Harry Milson This file consists of just one letter from Harry Milson to his mother from prison, he was based/imprisoned at Wormwood Scrubs Prison.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Pacifist. 1 file</p>	<p>29 Dec 1917</p>
U DCO/23	<p>Jack JW Morsman File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Jack JW Morsman he was based/imprisoned at Mill Hill Barracks. Wormwood Scrubs Prison. Wandsworth Prison.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Christian. 1 file</p>	<p>Dec 1916- Apr 1917</p>

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U DCO/24	<p>W Penn File. Correspondence and other papers relating to W Penn he was based/imprisoned at Mill Hill Barracks, Wormwood Scrubs Prison.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Pacifist. He was labelled by his fellow C.O.s as a 'stoic', although he would not choose to describe himself in this way. Refuses to make a statement in front of the tribunal. N.B. There are many letters to and from Penn in the other C.O.s' files. 1 file</p>	Mar-May 1917
U DCO/25	<p>Arthur Phillips File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Arthur Phillips he was based/imprisoned at Hounslow Barracks, Wormwood Scrubs Prison.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Christian. 1 file</p>	Oct 1916- Dec 1917
U DCO/26	<p>FW Pope File. Correspondence and other papers relating to FW Pope he was based/imprisoned at Shoreham Camp, Lewes Prison.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Christian. File contains news of C.O.'s in Harwich Prison being led out under armed escort and placed in a draft for France. 1 file</p>	May-Aug 1916
U DCO/27	<p>Harold B Pratt File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Harold B Pratt he was based/imprisoned at Mill Hill Barracks. Seaford Barracks. Shoreham Barracks. Newhaven Scrubs.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Pacifist and states he wants to fight against the tyranny of militarism. 1 file</p>	Jun-Oct 1916
U DCO/28	<p>Frank Pringle File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Frank Pringle he was based/imprisoned at Mill Hill Barracks. Wandsworth Prison.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was an Absolutist. 1 file</p>	Nov 1916- Mar 1917

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U DCO/29	<p>Sydney Reed File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Sydney Reed he was based/imprisoned at Black Dawn Camp. Sutton Mandeville Camp.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Pacifist. Includes letter: 20 Dec 1916 with an update about other Willesden comrades Black Dawn Camp. Sutton Mandeville Camp. 1 file</p>	Sep 1916- Jul 1917
U DCO/30	<p>Harry S Sampson File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Harry S Sampson he was based/imprisoned at Mill Hill Barracks, Wormwood Scrubs Prison.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Pacifist. Contains the statement from his court-martial, in which he declares his belief in the adoption of Passive Resistance and the powers of Love, Sympathy and Cooperation. 1 file</p>	Apr 1916- Mar 1917
U DCO/31	<p>A Sawyer File. Contains one letter and one postcard relating to A Sawyer he was based/imprisoned at Badajos Barracks, Aldershot.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Pacifist. 1 file</p>	Jan 1918
U DCO/32	<p>AS Simpson File. Correspondence and other papers relating to AS Simpson he was based/imprisoned at Road Board Camp, Denton, Newhaven, Sussex. Mill Hill Barracks.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Christian. Contains statement before Court Martial. 1 file</p>	Sep-Dec 1916
U DCO/33	<p>CW Spiller File. Correspondence and other papers relating to CW Spiller he was based/imprisoned at Mill Hill Barracks, Middlesex.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Absolutist (Socialist?). Contains letters with information about other Willesden comrades. 1 file</p>	Jan 1916- Feb 1917

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U DCO/34	Revd. F George Stevens File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Revd F George Stevens he was based/imprisoned at Mill Hill Barracks, Middlesex. He refused conscription as he was a Christian. 1 file	Mar-Apr 1917
U DCO/35	Harry C Stevens File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Harry C Stevens he was based/imprisoned at Mill Hill Barracks, Middlesex. He refused conscription as he was a Christian. Includes extensive number of letters, extracts from letters, and some nursery rhymes written whilst being detained. 1 file	Aug 1916- Apr 1917
U DCO/36	EJ Watson File. Correspondence and other papers relating to EJ Watson he was based/imprisoned at Mill Hill Barracks, Middlesex. He refused conscription as he was a Quaker. Includes letters from R.H. Creasy and Frank Pringle. 1 file	Nov 1916- Feb 1918
U DCO/37	George F Webb File. Correspondence and other papers relating to George F Webb he was based/imprisoned at Road Board Camp, Denton, Newhaven, Sussex. Lewes Detention Barracks. Balmer Camp. Falmer ? He refused conscription as he was a Pacifist (Quaker?). Contains account of conditions at Balmer Camp, and a note to say the camp was condemned after an outbreak of diphtheria. 1 file	Jun-Aug 1916
U DCO/38	Will Welbank File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Will Welbank he was based/imprisoned at Mill Hill Barracks. He refused conscription as he was a Pacifist. 1 file	Jun-Sep 1917

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- U DCO/39 Fred Wheeler Jan 1916-
Mar 1917
File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Fred Wheeler he was based/imprisoned at Mill Hill Barracks. Road Board Camp, Ballachulish & Caolasnacon, Scotland.

He refused conscription as he was a Pacifist, but agreed to work under the principle of alternative service. With an account of the heavy labouring work undertaken in Scotland through the Home Office Scheme. Also reveals difficulties faced by C.O.s in order to provide for their families. Includes letter from W. Penn to Wheeler and letter from Mary Wheeler to Penn.
1 file
- U DCO/40 Edward Whitehouse Jun 1916-
Feb 1917
File. Correspondence and other papers relating to Edward Whitehouse he was based/imprisoned at Seaford Barracks. Coventry Barracks. Royal Barracks, Dublin. Wormwood Scrubs Prison.

He refused conscription as he was a Christian and Absolutist. Includes list of reasons why C.O.s shouldn't work. Letter 7 Nov 1916 talking of the Quakers picketing the barracks.
1 file
- U DCO/41 WA Willington Feb 1916-
May 1917
File. Correspondence and other papers relating to WA Willington he was based/imprisoned at Newton Abbott Barracks, Devon. Wormwood Scrubs Prison.

He refused conscription as he was a Pacifist? With letters from his wife.
1 file
- U DCO/42 George Willson May 1916-
Jan 1917
File. Correspondence and other papers relating to George Willson he was based/imprisoned at 22nd Training Reserve Battalion, St. Albans. Quarry Camp, Dyce, near Aberdeen. Shoreham Camp. Mill Hill Barracks. Wandsworth Prison.

He refused conscription as he was a Pacifist, but has agreed to work under the principle of alternative service. With an account of the day to day activities of men working at Quarry Camp, Dyce near Aberdeen through the Home Office Scheme. Also includes a defence of accepting work not connected with the military.
1 file

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U DCO/43	<p>L Sidney Woodruff File. Correspondence and other papers relating to L Sidney Woodruff he was based/imprisoned at Seaford Barracks. Coventry Barracks. Wormwood Scrubs Prison.</p> <p>He refused conscription as he was a Absolutist. With a letter asking comrades in the Willesden Branch of the N.C.F. for advice about what is appropriate behaviour and the correct course of action for C.O.'s who have just been called up for military service. One letter (12 Jun 1916) mentions the difficulties faced by a C.O. named Kippax who is not a member of any organisation or support group. 1 file</p>	Jun 1916- May 1917
U DCO/44	<p>General file relating to conscientious objectors Relating to conscientious objectors includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Limericks about certain Willesden N.C.F. members written March - April 1917.- Letter from the prison commission, stating that ministers can only visit those prisoners of the same religious persuasion.- Letter from the N.C.F. HQ about the terminology on the letters of exemption.- Publication, The C.O.'s Hansard (20 Mar 1919).- Newspaper clipping about Rev. G.S. Stevens- Anonymous court martial statement 3 Sep 1917- Letter from a C.O. ambulance man- Statement of belief from a socialist C.O.- Resolutions of the Mill Hill Guard Room Branch of the N.C.F 18 Dec 1916.- Letter from Home Office about a C.O. willing to do work of national importance under civilian control.- A short statement about the need to discriminate between moral and political objectors. <p>1 file</p>	Dec 1916- Mar 1919
U DCO/45	<p>List of U DCO/1-44 by David Rubinstein A list of the contents of U DCO with some background about its custodial history. 1 item</p>	13 Mar 1968
U DCO/46	<p>Photocopy of a letter from Miss Gladys Gellett to David Rubinstein, University of Hull Regarding conscientious objectors and encloses a copy of a letter from Rowland Philcox, concerning his intended refusal to obey a military order at the risk of execution, dated 10 May 1916 2 items</p>	25 Mar 1968

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