

Abstract

Conscientious Objectors During Britain's Last Popular War

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This paper contains the results of my research on the conscientious objectors of World War II in Great Britain. After a brief overview of the events of the 1920's and 1930's which led to the formation of pacifist sentiments in Britain, I discuss my findings regarding who the conscientious objectors were, what the differences were between the objectors in the second world war and the first world war, and how the objectors in the second war were treated by their government and society. I also present information regarding the various experiences of the objectors during the war and the legal aspects of conscientious objection.

Introduction

Approximately 6,000,000 British men fought on the European front in World War I; 1,700,000 were injured and 750,000 died. This meant that Britain lost one out of every eleven men between the ages of twenty and forty-five.¹ Trench warfare, mustard gas, machine guns, No Man's Land, all were horrific events to a generation that had not heard a shot fired in war. Men and women who had greeted the Great War with enthusiasm and national pride were appalled by the brutalities encountered in it.

After the war Britons, along with the rest of the countries who had fought, believed that there would never be another conflict like it. There were two reasons for this. First there was a faith in the League of Nations as an international peacekeeping body. The second reason was that it was difficult to imagine anyone supporting another show of brutality and waste such as the Great War. These reasons combined to create the pacifist movement in Britain.

Pacifism in Britain reached its height in the 1930's. A decade of distance from the pain of war allowed writers, playwrights and poets to begin producing literature describing their experiences in the Great War. Novels and plays published in the late twenties, such as Siegfried Sassoon's *Memoirs of a Fox-hunting Man* (1928), R.C. Sherriff's play *Journey's End* (1929) and, especially, Beverly Nichols' *Cry Havoc* (1933) heavily influenced people through their depictions of the senselessness and waste of war. For the first time in the century, a secular pacifist movement began.

The secular movement organized itself through the formation of pacifist societies. One such group was the No More War Movement. Members of this organization signed a pledge stating "I am determined not to take part in any war, international or civil."¹ The Reverend Dick

Sheppard, canon of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, founded the Peace Pledge Union in late 1934. He began by asking Britons to send him postcards stating that they vowed to renounce war and never again sanction another. By the end of 1935 there were over 100,000 members.

Organizations such as these, coupled with religious groups such as the Society of Friends, the Christadelphians and the Jehovah's Witnesses, actively promoted pacifism throughout the country.

The crowning achievement of pacifism in the 1930's was the Peace Ballot. This ballot was not an official government voting exercise. Rather, volunteers canvassed neighborhoods throughout Britain, asking for answers to five questions: Should Britain remain a member of the League of Nations?, Were they in favor of a global reduction in arms through international agreement, Did they support a global abolition of national military and naval aircraft through international agreement, Should there be international restrictions on the private manufacture and sale of arms, and finally, "Do you consider that, if a nation insists on attacking another, the other nations should combine to compel it to stop by (a) Economic and non-military measures? (b) If necessary, military measures?". Results for this private referendum were announced on 27 June 1935. Over 11-1/2 million Britons responded to the Ballot. The overwhelming answer to all of the questions was yes. However, the extent of pacifist sentiment in Britain is seen in the results of the last question, 5(b). Twenty percent of the voters said they would not support military measures.³

Despite such support, events of the late 1930's brought about a questioning and the eventual downfall of widespread pacifism in Britain. The invasion of Abyssinia by the Italians in 1935 caused some to doubt whether they could stand by and watch as one country's liberties were trampled by an aggressor. However, this event was far away from Europe and the consciousness

of most Britons. It was easy to give excuses for the failure of the League of Nations and international sanctions. Closer to home, though, was the Spanish Civil War. Throughout the thirties pacifism and the political left were linked together. When fighting erupted between the Republicans, led by General Ferdinand Franco, and the Loyalists, many left-wing pacifists found a cause for which they were willing to fight. As a result of the war, pacifism changed from being a hallmark of liberalism to finding its strongest support among political conservatives. Further the unchecked acts of Nazi aggression in central and eastern Europe led people to question the success of international sanctions in keeping peace. The outbreak of war in 1939 was a death knell to the popular support which pacifism had enjoyed in Britain throughout the last decade. Radicals of the 1930's found it impossible to support pacifism with the threat of a possible invasion of their homeland by the Nazis.

Differences with World War I

Although support for the war was overwhelming, there remained small pockets of pacifism. These men and women became the conscientious objectors of World War II. Included in this group were the objectors of World War I, such as Vera Brittain, Fenner Brockway, and C.E.M. Joad. However, the majority of the conscientious objectors were the children of the "lost generation". These were the Britons born in the years immediately before the Great War. They grew up hearing the horror stories of war from their parents and reading the anti-war literature published in the 1920's and 30's. This younger generation protested the war for many of the same reasons as the objectors in the previous war-political, moral, and religious reasons. While in spirit they resembled their brethren of the Great War, this new generation experienced differences in their treatment by the government and by the public.

The government was much kinder to the new conscientious objectors. The government anticipated the necessity of handling objectors, and due to its preparations objectors found the registration process easier. The conscription process was smoother and more streamlined than in the previous war. The qualifications for exemption from military service due to conscience were clearer. While the government made no attempt to strictly define the meaning of "conscience", the guidelines established allowed for considerable leeway in the types of objections accepted. In the first war the majority of exemptions were given to Quakers. Objectors in the second world war could gain exemption on political and moral grounds, as well as religious. Also, the Tribunals established to determine the sincerity of the objections were fairer. Firstly, there was no military representative at the hearings. The Tribunals of World War I were sometimes overrun by the military representative. Further, each Tribunal was conducted by a local judge, who had a better grasp of the law. And finally, the Tribunals dealt only with exemptions; they did not handle offenses related to objection with or disobedience to the conscription law.

Another difference was in the terms of compulsory service required of Britons. Not only were men liable for conscription in the military, they could also be called up for civilian work of national importance and for civil defense. Possible situations included working in munitions factories or serving on a fire brigade in the cities. This was allowed through the Registration for Employment Order, passed in March, 1941. With this the Minister of Labour could register men and women for possible industrial service. For the first time women became eligible for conscription, a fact which added over 1000 women to the rolls of conscientious objectors.⁴

Legalities

The first law requiring compulsory military service for the second world war was enacted on 26 May 1939. This was the Military Training Act. With the passing of this Act, Parliament acknowledged the possibility, and perhaps inevitability, of another war with Germany. The Act required that all male British resident citizens between the ages of 20 and 21 years be registered for military training. Once on the rolls, each was subject to call up within one year of registration. After the period of training, they were enlisted as Militiamen for four years. The act expired three years after its enactment.⁵ However, it lasted only four months. It was replaced the day war was declared by the National Service (Armed Forces) Act of 1939.

This new Act, enacted 3 September 1939, encompassed all male British subjects living in or entering Great Britain between eighteen and forty-one years of age. This Act required each male to register for service at his appointed call-up time. Once registered he was given a medical examination, and after completing this was served with enlistment papers. Further, each draftee was enlisted "until the end of the present emergency."⁶

And what of the conscientious objectors? Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain had sat on the Birmingham Tribunal for conscientious objectors in World War I and wished for the government during this war to avoid "a useless and an exasperating waste of time an effort in attempting to force those with strong conscientious scruples to act in a manner contrary to their principles."⁷ In following this, the government recognized in both Acts the rights of men to conscientiously object to compulsory military service. The National Services (Armed Forces) Act, Section 5, stated: "If any person liable under this Act to be called up for services claims that he conscientiously objects-(a) to being registered in the military service register, or (b) to performing

military service, or (c) to performing combatant duties, he may, on furnishing the prescribed particulars about himself, apply in the prescribed manner to be registered as a conscientious objector in a special register to be kept by the Minister."⁸ This applied to all men considered in the Act, and was extended to include men ages 42-46 who were required to register for enlistment in the Home Guard. The minister was also permitted to register as conscientious objectors those men who refused to apply for registration with their age groups, if he believed their refusal to cooperate was based on conscience.

When writing the Act, lawmakers also wished to prevent the "cat and mouse" treatment* of objectors who were in the services. Such a situation occurred during the Great War when an objector was given a Court Martial for refusing to obey a direct order and sentenced to some sort of military detention or imprisonment. Often men in these conditions cycled in and out of prison because they remained true to their pacifist beliefs and continued to disobey military orders. In response to this, Section 13 of the Act stated: "If a person who has made application as a conscientious objector but who has nevertheless been called up under the Act for service, is undergoing a sentence of penal servitude or imprisonment for a term of three months or more imposed on him by a Court Martial in respect of an offense which he claims to have been committed by reason of his conscientiously objecting to performing military service...he may apply to have his case considered by the Appellate Tribunal."⁹ It must be emphasized that this section of the Act applied only to those men who had originally registered as conscientious objectors, but

* The term "cat and mouse treatment" originated in 1912 with the passing of the so called "Cat and Mouse Act". This act applied to suffragettes who engaged in hunger strikes during imprisonment. The suffragettes were released from prison when their health declined, but rearrested after it improved, a futile cycle that proved disastrous to the health of the ladies as well as the image of the government.

were called up anyway. Soldiers who developed a conscientious objection during the war did not have the right to attend an Appellate hearing.

Tribunals

Tribunals were the very heart of the registration process for conscientious objectors. In the Great War the Tribunals were hastily established, with little guidance, as the government was not prepared to handle the conscientious objectors. An anonymous author in the 20 May 1939 issue of *The New Statesman and Nation*^{*} wrote: "[T]he tribunals took little account of the legal provisions for the exemption of conscientious objectors. They were usually composed of local bigwigs and shopkeepers and they were often dominated by the military representative. Their behaviour varied from place to place all over the country. Sometimes they were merely abusive and, under the influence of war passion, completely forgetful of their legal duties. Most of them treated all the C.O.s as cowards..."¹⁰

Luckily for the new generation of objectors, the government learned from the mistakes of the previous war. The Tribunals established in 1939 consisted of a local judge, who sat as the chair, and four other members appointed by the Minister, one of whom must be appointed with the approval of the local labor representative. When compulsory service was expanded to include women, two female members were added to the Tribunals, increasing their numbers to seven.

Once one applied as a conscientious objector he or she had within fourteen days to submit to the Tribunal a letter describing their beliefs. Upon receipt of this the Tribunal issued the applicant a hearing date. The applicant could bring with him a witness to testify to the strength of

^{*}*The New Statesman and Nation* is a Labour periodical started in 1912 by the Fabian Society. Contributors included World War I pacifists such as John Maynard Keynes, Leonard and Virginia Woolf, and C.E.M. Joad. Also appearing in the magazine were anti-war cartoons by David Low.

his convictions. Organizations such as the Peace Pledge Union and the Central Board for Conscientious Objectors provided legal advice and support for objectors at their hearings. After questioning the applicant the Tribunal issued one of four decisions regarding his status. Each objector was either: 1. granted complete exemption from service, or 2. granted exemption on the condition that he be employed in an industry of national importance, such as agriculture or mining, or 3. granted exemption from combatant duties but required to enlist in the Non-Combatant Corps, or 4. removed from the register of conscientious objectors and rendered eligible for active service. Upon receiving his judgement the objector had the option of going before an Appellate Tribunal, if he felt the local Tribunal did not render fair ruling. Appellate Tribunals consisted of a judge and two other members. As with the local Tribunals, the members of the Appellate Tribunals were appointed by the Minister.

The chart below shows the decisions of both the local and Appellate Tribunals, as well as the percentage of objectors that fell into each category.¹¹

	Local Decisions		After Appeals	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Registered unconditionally as Conscientious Objectors	2,810	4.7	3,577	6.1
Registered conditionally as Conscientious Objectors	22,059	37.3	28,720	48.5
Registered for non-combatant duties in the Forces	16,784	28.4	14,691	24.8
Total Registered as Conscientious Objectors	41,653	70.4	46,988	79.4
Persons removed from register of Conscientious Objectors	17,539	29.6	12,204	20.6

A total of 59,192 men appeared before the Tribunals while they were active (July, 1939-June, 1945). The largest number of objectors were found in the early twenties age group called up around the end of the first year of war. The percentage of men applying for excusal from service dwindled as the war progressed and the age of the conscripts increased, although there were never more than 1.8% of men registering as objectors in an age group. There are several reasons for the decline in numbers. The first is that as the war moved into the early forties, the threat of a Nazi invasion of Britain became imminent. Men found it harder to object to war when it directly affected their country. Family also played a role in the decisions of the older men. Men in their late twenties and early thirties were more likely to have family and property to defend in a war. It was much easier to not care about the effects of war on personal property and family when one had neither, as was the case with many of the student age objectors. Returning to the decisions of the Tribunals, thirty-one percent of the men applying as objectors went on to the Appellate level. Of these were 59% of the men whose names had been removed from the register and 39% of the men who had been ordered to non-combatant duties within the services. The Appellate Tribunals added over 5,000 names to the register, but also worsened the judgements for 280 men.¹²

Despite the improvements of the Tribunal system complaints arose regarding prejudicial remarks and bullying attempts. As early as 3 November 1939, *The Times* reported a question in the House of Commons regarding complaints. Mr. Woodburn (Clackmannan & Stirling, Lab) asked the Minister of Labour about allegations of Tribunal members arguing with the objectors and issuing Biblical quotes that offended some. Mr. E. Brown (Leith, Lnat) defended the Tribunal members, saying that they "must necessarily question applicants in order to test the sincerity of their convictions." At the Thursday, 22 February, 1940, sitting of the House of

Commons Mr. Pethick-Lawrence (Edinburgh, Lab) brought up the subject of impropriety on Tribunals again. He stated that while he "did not attack tribunals as a whole or condemn their procedure, conduct, or judgement, ...proceedings in some of the tribunals were undignified, unseemly, and not in accordance with the wishes of the House of Commons."¹³ He went on to cite the case of two Tribunals in which there were reports of bullying and mistreatment of the applicants. At the Newcastle Tribunal the chairman was alleged to have remarked to applicants whose last names were Donald, Cameron, and Douglas: "Good fighting names. I think some of the holders of these names would turn in their coffins if they heard what the present holders of these names are now saying." And at the London Tribunal Sir Edmund Phipps reportedly remarked "What miserable creatures!" and said "What tosh!" during the middle of one of the applicant's answers.¹⁴ Reports such as these surfaced throughout the war. However, the abuses were never as extreme as those reported in the first war.

Living as an Objector

Once an objector received the Tribunal's judgement, it was his responsibility to live under those terms. Objectors who were classified in the first category were able to return to any employment they desired. Some of them worked in "reserved occupations", jobs which were classified as of such national importance that the employees were exempt from service. The jobs did not always remain open to them, though. A man employed by the County Borough Council of West Bromwich reported that his employers had decided that "those who exercise their legal right to refuse to serve in the armed forces are not fit to remain in their (the county's) future service." He was given "leave of absence without pay for the duration of the war" and was required to sign a statement agreeing that he would not seek to recover any lost wages through

the courts and was further signing the statement with his own free will.¹⁵ He refused to sign, and was shocked to discover that his local trade union would not support him against the Council. Others experienced similar prejudices against them. Roger Wilson was fired by the BBC, despite years of service, because he was an objector.¹⁶ Instances such as these reflect the mistrust and discrimination towards objectors that lingered throughout the country. While the position of conscientious objection was more widely accepted during the second world war than in the first, there remained feelings of resentment, distrust and even hatred towards them from the supporters of the war.

Objectors who were given exemption on the condition that they pursue work of national importance also experienced discrimination. In the first year of the war, conscientious objectors experienced great hostility in rural areas where they sought agricultural employment. Local labour exchanges, recognizing the sentiments of the area which they served, were of little help. A turning point occurred when the Forestry Commission began employing objectors in its project to replant trees in deforested areas of England. In response to the acceptance found here the Christian Pacifist Forestry and Land Unit was formed. After the objectors proved themselves hard workers in this area, they began receiving employment opportunities in other agricultural areas.¹⁷

Complaints against the work of objectors still arose. In May, 1941, C.L. Carlos Clarke, a retired major from Sussex, wrote to *The Times* describing the less than enthusiastic work ethic of the objectors he had hired through the Surrey War Agricultural Committee to dig a drainage scheme on his property. They had worked for two months on a job that should have taken one, and still were not finished. Further, they had caused damage to fencelines and gates along the

area. There existed no real foreman in charge of the men and no sense of a work ethic among the group.¹⁸ N.J. Hodgkinson wrote of a similar experience. In this case a skilled foreman was hired to oversee the objectors, but they remained lazy and insubordinate.¹⁹ In defense of the objectors Henry Carter, chairman of the CPFLU, wrote that there existed a small number of men who drifted about the countryside, who had no training and failed at their work. These men, Carter asserted, gave the majority of the objectors a bad name. He continued with "Evidence can be submitted of groups of C.O.s assembled by public authorities in areas for land work, with no proper provision for housing, sanitation, or essential social amenities. The inability of men to render consistently good work, with such an unwholesome background for their daily life, is obvious."²⁰ C. Porteous, a Labor Officer with the County Institute of Agriculture in Lancashire, added that his War Agricultural Executive Committee had positive experiences with the conscientious objectors in their employ, and intended to absorb as many as came forward in the coming months. "It is not easy to understand why difficulty has arisen in employing these men in other cases, but very much depends on the attitude adopted by foremen who are put in charge of the men."²¹

Men who were registered with the Non-Combatant Corps received a taste of life in the Army. Established in 1940, the fourteen companies of the NCC served the Army by building Nissen huts*, digging trenches, and setting up and lighting smoke screens around reservoirs. Later in the war objectors in the NCC became guards for the POW camps in Britain. The objectors experienced mixed receptions from the Army. In one instance a conscientious objector company received a new sergeant, who reported that he had been warned never to order the

*Nissen huts were sheet metal and wood structures similar to Quonset huts. They were used as barracks, storage facilities and shelters.

NCC. Instead he should ask them to do something. Dennis Waters gave this account of his time¹ in the NCC: "The army mind is most peculiar, at Ilfracombe you had certain regular army officers who didn't understand us at all, you had people who'd been called up, solicitors, professional men and what not, who were quite decent in themselves and were worried by what was happening to us. They had a sense of fair play and they didn't like what was going on and then you had the NCO's who quite frankly were the scum of the earth."²²

Waters had good reason to express such an opinion. He was an objector who refused to don a uniform, regardless of duties. Such an attitude of disobedience earned him a Court Martial and a sentence in a military prison. Before he left for his prison time, a Sergeant Maloney came around to all of the objectors who felt similarly, and administered pressure to make them "toe the line", pressure in the form of physical abuse. "It all happened one morning. This sergeant was in charge of us and he'd been bawling us out of course as he always did, but whether he was getting impatient with the fact that we hadn't toed the line I don't know but he decided that he would rough us up to make us toe the line. And he went into the room next door where young Ashley Morris was and I heard him bawling and shouting and then I heard the sound of blows...and then he appeared in my room and went through the same routine."²³

Reports of brutality by the Army came in throughout the war from other NCC camps. At Dingle Vale the abuse was particularly harsh in the fact that it was organized and sanctioned by the commanding officer of the unit. Here there was not only physical abuse but also psychological. Objectors were locked up in dark rooms, put on bread and water rations and deprived of sleep.²⁴ Few officers and NCO's were ever Court Martialed for their offenses. In the

case of Sergeant Maloney, he was acquitted of all charges, an event that flabbergasted Dennis Waters.²⁵

Public and Political Opinion

Conscientious objectors of the second world war had cause to be grateful to their brethren from the Great War. The struggle fought by the first generation of objectors resulted in greater public acceptance of their pacifist positions in the second war. There also existed for the new generation of objectors a support base, both legal and emotional. One group that aided objectors during the war was the Peace Pledge Union. While the ranks of Dick Sheppard's followers had dwindled from the pre-war high of 100,000, the PPU remained active in its support for pacifism and the conscientious objectors. Members could be found at labor exchanges, handing out fliers promoting pacifism. They were also present at Tribunals. Here they explained the legal rights granted to objectors and provided legal representation to men and women appearing before the Tribunals. Such endeavors earned the PPU the displeasure of Parliament. On 22 February 1940, Sir W. Davidson (Kensington, S., U.) asked the Home Secretary about possible disciplinary actions towards the PPU regarding events occurring at the East and West Riding Conscientious Objection Tribunal. The chairman of that Tribunal reported that the PPU was picketing in front of labor exchanges, enticing men to join their organization. The PPU also sponsored special classes designed to inform potential objectors of the best possible way to present their cases before the Tribunals. Sir J. Anderson (Scottish Universities, Nat.) replied that the activities of the PPU were being carefully monitored, and the possibility of special restrictive measures regarding the issue was being considered.²⁶

Another organization dedicated to assisting objectors was the Central Board of Conscientious Objectors. This board, of which Fenner Brockway was president, maintained a register of all objectors. They monitored the decisions of the Tribunals, as well as the treatment of objectors throughout the nation. The CBCO was particularly vehement on the subject of prisoners' rights. Throughout the war the board protested conditions in the prisons where objectors were held, as well as the "cat and mouse" treatment of those who refused medical examinations. In this situation the CBCO claimed the government was deliberately incarcerating and releasing objectors, knowing full well that those men would only be reimprisoned because of their beliefs and refusal to subject to an examination. The CBCO believed the government should grant exemption to those men, since the sincerity of their beliefs was proven through their willingness to stay in the harsh conditions of prison.

Through the work of the first world war's objectors and with the support of organizations such as the PPU and CBCO, objectors were able to live fairly undisrupted lives. There were instances of prejudice and abuse, though. As mentioned earlier, some objectors experienced discrimination in their place of business. Most often affected by public opinion were the wives and children of conscientious objectors. They reported ostracism among their neighbors, and the children were sometimes taunted by their school mates. One wife had her ration book thrown in her face by a postal clerk after he learned her husband served in the NCC. She later discovered that the clerk's son had been killed the week before on the front.²⁷

As for the political attitude towards conscientious objectors, the statement made by Chamberlain prior to the start of the war remained true throughout the conflict. Parliament maintained the position that the views of the objectors were valid and ought to be recognized.

Conscientious objectors also enjoyed the support of several MP's, the most vocal of whom was the Duke of Bedford.

Bedford spoke several times before the House of Lords regarding the position and treatment of objectors. His topics included the "cat and mouse" treatment of objectors and the rights of objectors to refuse Civil Defence duties such as fire watching. In a speech delivered 18 January 1944, Bedford pressed for an end to the cycle of imprisonment and release endured by objectors who either refused a medical examination or refused to comply with the terms of registration set by the tribunals. He also asked for the reinstatement of Army Order X from the Great War. This order allowed soldiers who refused to obey orders on grounds of conscience to serve their prison sentences in civilian rather than military prisons. This would, hopefully, prevent abuses from occurring.²⁸

With regards to objection to fire watching duties, Bedford supported objectors who refused to engage in these duties. Such a position, he stated, stemmed from the belief that the government would not be worried about fires caused by bombs if the nation were not involved in war, and if it wished to avoid future fires, then the government should put its efforts into stopping the war, not the fires themselves. Bedford's remarks on this issue earned him the scorn of his peers. Viscount Elibank stated that excusing objectors from any civic duty would allow them to "skulk behind [their] neighbors" and that "[t]hey appeared to wish to become the pampered darlings of the community."²⁹

And Finally

The conscientious objectors of World War II were a mixed lot, from those with strict religious upbringings to radical anarchists. Despite the differences in their backgrounds, they were all dedicated to the belief that war was wrong.

In World War II there were three times as many men who applied as conscientious objectors than in the first world war. To understand the phenomenal growth in the number of pacifists between the wars, the societies from which each group emerged must be examined.

The conscientious objectors of the Great War were pioneers. They fought harsh public sentiment and prejudice from the government in their protest of the war. These men (they were all men in the first war) viewed the war as an imperialistic struggle for gain. They also opposed the war from the view that killing another human was wrong.

The next generation of conscientious objectors was raised hearing and reading about the experiences of the previous war. Not only were there memoirs of conscientious objectors, such as *We Did Not Fight*, there were also the anti-war publications of veterans. In the years following the Great War, there existed throughout Britain a belief that the international community would not support another Great War. International sanctions were the key to maintaining peace, and people placed their faith in the League of Nations. The new generation of conscientious objectors lived surrounded by the pacifist sentiment of the 1930's. When the League of Nations failed and war was declared against Germany, the new objectors persisted in their beliefs regarding the wrongness of war. The group included religious pacifists, moral objectors and political objectors.

The lives of conscientious objectors during the second world war were also improved by the efforts of the earlier pacifists. Both the government and the nation accepted the right of

people to object to the war and military service. Legislation such as the National Service (Armed Forces) Act provided a place for the objectors in society during the war. Prejudice and abuse towards objectors did exist during World War II. There were instances of harsh treatment by the military and by civilian employers. However, these cases were minor compared to the treatment of objectors in the previous war.

Post-war Britain, too, was more accepting of the conscientious objectors. Whereas after the Great War objectors found many jobs closed to them, the objectors of the second world war returned to the workplace with few disruptions. The government also continued to support the rights of conscientious objectors. When the draft was extended past the end of the war, Parliament included in that legislation a guarantee against service for conscientious objectors.

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