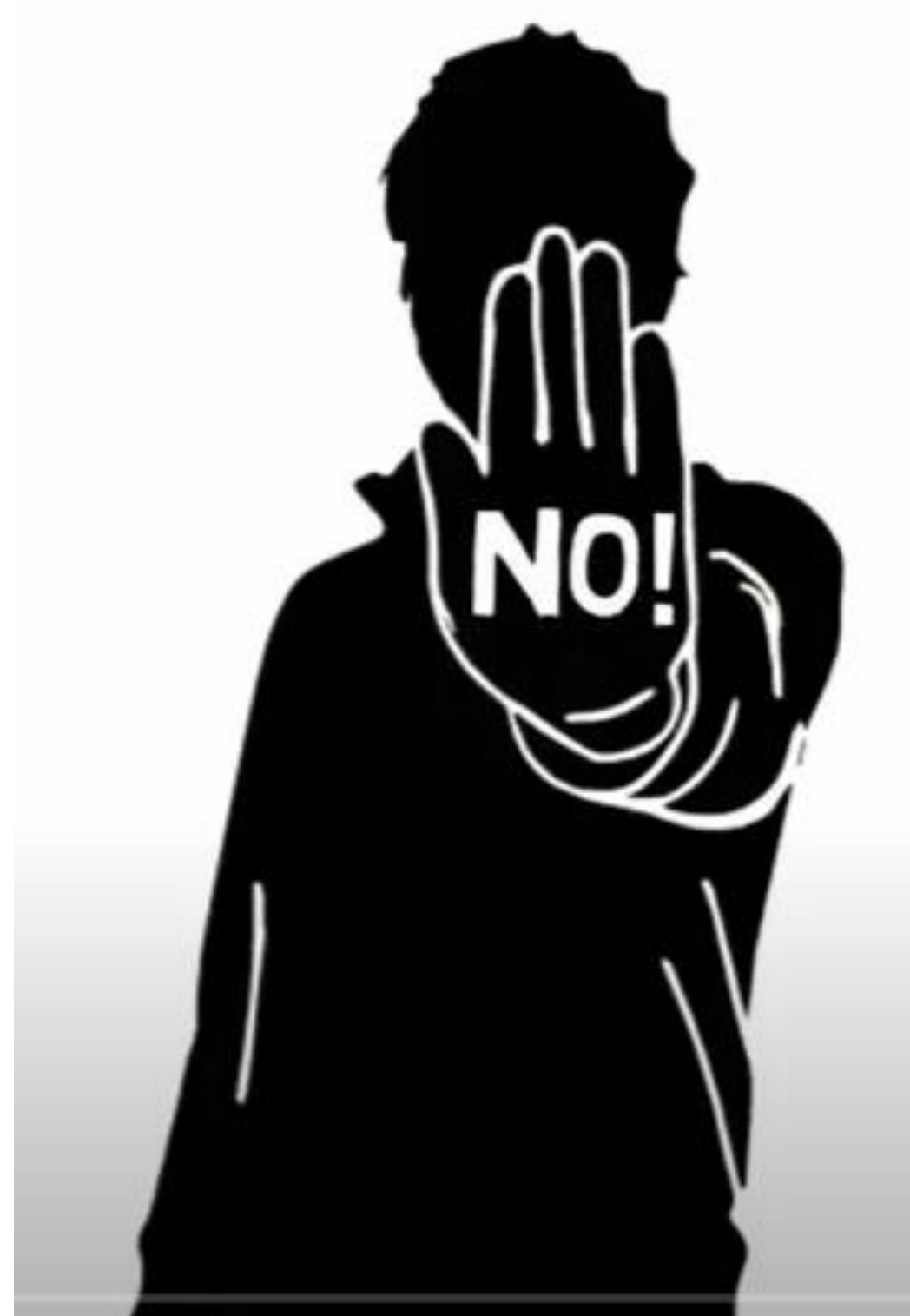


conscience *noun*: the sense of right and wrong that governs a person's thoughts and actions.

The New Collins Concise English Dictionary (1987)

[Conscientious objectors](#)

video explanation



Why do you think people objected to joining the army?

What do you think happened to them?

Conscientious Objectors in World War 1

A lot of people did not want to join the army in World War 1, they were called conscientious objectors. They had to explain to a special court why they did not want to fight.

Sometimes they were made to join the army, sometimes they could support the war in a way that did not involve fighting, for example helping those hurt. Some COs did not want to support the war effort in any way, so were sent to prison.



'Sentenced to be shot' image from newspaper of Howard Marten and John Ring.
© 2014 The Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain

"We were forever being threatened with the death sentence - over and over again - all done with the idea of intimidating us. The military authorities didn't know how to react... we weren't people that could be bullied into it... we were never prepared to do things in a military way. We never saluted anyone. We never stood to attention."

Howard Marten

“May God give you the strength to go on for it is the only way. You know that I stand with you and [...] back you up. If only I could do a little to help these children of ours to be more ready and fitted to fill their place in the world as worthily as their father is filling his I shall be thankful. It will be a great help to them in the future, Hubert, this out and out stand which you have taken.”

"The English People and the German People have got angry with each other like two children who want the same toys, and hundreds of men are now trying to kill each other. Now Daddy and Mummy and lots of other people think it is wrong even if another person gets angry with you, for you to get angry with them. [...] This is why your Daddy says he cannot be a soldier and go and try to kill the daddies of little German boys and girls. Most people think he ought to go and, because he will not and thinks it is wrong, they are shutting him up in prison."

Why did he refuse to fight?

What influenced his decision?

Do you think it was an easy decision for him to make?



Edith Peet wrote to tell Hubert about how their daughters responded to his letter:

"The girls talk about you continually and of all they are going to do and tell you when you come back. They are being so very good and I very seldom have any tears or bother. The letter you sent them before you went right away was so dear. We read it often, they like to hear it and I think they have quite grasped what it means. Mary stands up for you very much but I heard Joan say to her the other day, 'I think Daddy ought to have gone and been a soldier when they wanted him to go, Mary.' 'I don't,' said Mary very promptly."

How do you think you would think and feel if it was your parent or carer?

Why do you think Joan disagreed with her dad's decision?

Why do you think Mary agreed?