



WELSH EFFORTS FOR
WORLD PEACE,
1920-1927.

The CHILDREN OF WALES were the first to send by Wireless a greeting of goodwill to all other children in every land under the sun.

The WOMEN OF WALES were the first to send a message of Peace from the homes of one people to the homes of another.

The TEACHERS OF WALES were the first to teach the principles of the League of Nations in the schools.

The CHURCHES OF WALES were the first to make an annual offering in furtherance of World Peace.



CYMRU DROS
HEDDWCH
WALES FOR
PEACE

Cofio dros Heddwch Remembering for Peace

Adnodd Cwricwlwm ar gyfer Disgyblion CA2-CA4
A curriculum Resource for KS2 – KS4 learners in Wales



YR APÊL
ODDIWRTH FERCHED CYMRU
A MYNWWY AT FERCHED UNOL
DALEITHIAU YR AMERICA

THE MEMORIAL FROM WALES
SIGNED BY 390296 WOMEN IN
WALES AND MONMOUTHSHIRE
TO THE WOMEN OF THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA



WalesforPeace.org
CymrudrosHeddwch.org

Lesson 5:

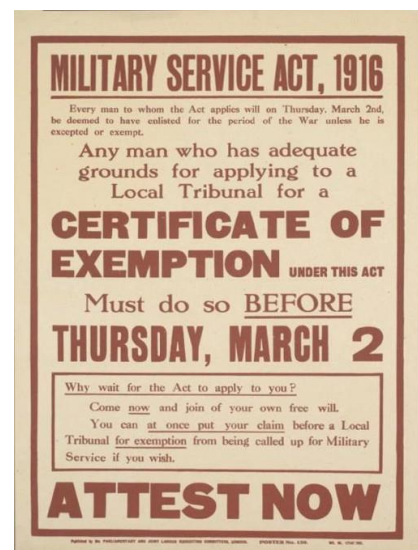
The Impact of War on Peacemakers

Learning objectives

- To consider the impact of WWI on those who were opposed to it on moral, spiritual or political grounds
- To consider the choices that were available to peacemakers in wartime – and the consequences of those choices
- To learn about some prominent peacemakers in Wales
- To consider how the experience of peacemakers during wartime may have changed over time

Introduction for Teachers

At the beginning of World War I enlistment into the armed forces was voluntary. As the war dragged on, however, and as casualties mounted, the need for new recruits became more pressing. In March 1916 the Military Service Act came into force, which meant that all men between 18 and 41 years of age could be called up, unless they were married, widowed with children or ministers of religion. In May 1916 the act was amended to include married men. The only other people who were exempted were those working in certain reserved occupations i.e. mining, farming and munitions.



case; to allow the appellant to undertake non-combatant service (e.g. as an ambulance driver); or to agree to them undertaking other work of 'national importance' (e.g. agriculture, forestry).

Some conscientious objectors were willing to undertake alternative service. Others, however, refused to do any work that supported the war effort. It was this latter group – the 'absolutists' – that had a particularly hard time. They were imprisoned in very harsh conditions, refused visits from their families and required to do hard labour, such as breaking stones. Most weren't released until 1919, after the war was well over, and it could then be difficult for them to gain employment.

The Impact of War on Peacemakers

Four case studies are provided – for Niclas y Glais, Thomas Rees, Ithel Davies and Emrys Hughes. Before looking at these case studies, it is suggested that some preparatory work is done to help students understand what a conscientious objector is, and to empathise with what it feels like to stand up for your principles and suffer as a result. (*See activities below*).

Preparatory and response activities

KS2-3:

1. Individually, think of a time when you've faced a difficult decision. This might be a choice you had to make, or it could be about standing up for something you feel strongly about. How did you feel? What were the choices you had to face, and what influenced your decision? What did you decide to do in the end, and why?
2. Choose someone you feel comfortable sharing with, and share your story.
3. As a class, discuss in general: what does it feel like when you have a difficult decision to make? Who or what can support you?
4. Put some WWI posters up around the room (see: <http://hwb.wales.gov.uk/resources/resource/96aef42e-acd1-4730-bf8f-c87b6a94daf8>), and describe to pupils the sort of atmosphere there would have been in towns and villages across Wales. What would it have felt like to be against war in such an atmosphere?
5. Divide into 4 groups, and give each a copy or copies of one of the case studies.
6. As a class discuss: what do you think of the choice they made and the treatment they received? Are they cowards or examples to follow? How do you think they felt? What about the prison officers / people who had to deal with them?

Follow-up activities

KS2-3:

1. As a more interactive activity, do “What would you do?” This takes pupils through a series of choices, and helps them to consider what the consequences of those choices can be in time of war.
2. Either: write an account of your experiences as a Conscientious Objector in World War I

Or: Imagine you are a prison officer who has to deal with one of the cases you have read about. Imagine your conversation with your family at the end of the day.

KS4:

1. Set up a mock tribunal, using the imaginary roles provided in the teaching resources for this unit, and some of the genuine tribunal cases from Cardiganshire supplied on Hwb (see [Aberystwyth Tribunal Papers](#)). Allow your students time to look at the tribunal papers and to imagine themselves into the roles of the tribunal members – then run the tribunal. What decisions will the court make? Does it concur with what actually happened?
2. [Look at the Pearce Register of Conscientious Objectors](#). Can you find any Conscientious Objectors from your area? What can you find out about them? On what ground did they refuse, and what happened to them as a result?
3. Write either a blog or a film script about a Conscientious Objector of your choice.

The story today

We tend to think of Conscientious Objectors as something of the past, but they still exist today. Although the experiences of COs in WWII tended to be better than in WWI, the experiences recounted by Merfyn Turner and Dyfnallt Morgan show that they still suffered. (See: <https://wciavoices.wordpress.com/category/wales-for-peace-cymru-dros-heddwch/conscientious-objectors/>)

To consider **the role of COS today**, ask students to:

1. Find out in what countries in the world there are still Conscientious Objectors. Are there any surprises?
2. Look at the cases of Joe Glenton ([Joe Glenton BBC News Story](#)) and Omar Sa'ad ([Omar Sa'ad Article](#)). Ask pupils to look at these case studies without talking, underlining any words or sections that strike them and writing any personal reactions to the stories. Then discuss:

- a. Why did the person in the story object to military service?
- b. What were their choices?
- c. How were they treated, and how do you feel about this?

The Big Question:

Are Conscientious Objectors brave or are they cowards?

1. *Conscientious Objectors suffered because of their stance – but many of their friends and contemporaries died. Would you describe COs as brave or heroes? Why / why not?*
2. *What would you be willing to stand up - and potentially die – for?*

Related resources

- Hwb: WWI Educational Project – resources on Conscientious Objectors:
<http://hwb.wales.gov.uk/resources/resource/472321c6-930a-4eca-825f-25e74d004c05/en>
- WCIA Voices – blogs on Welsh Conscientious Objectors:
<https://wciavoices.wordpress.com/category/wales-for-peace-cymru-dros-heddwch/conscientious-objectors/>
- 'Voices of Conscience' – DVD featuring 6 stories of Welsh men and women who have stood up for their beliefs:
<http://hwb.wales.gov.uk/resources/resource/e7a67ebd-356e-4fb5-be5a-955a0d03>

Accompanying Resources

Lesson 5:

The Impact of War on Peacemakers

Students' Introduction

At the beginning of World War I people could choose whether or not they wanted to join the armed forces. As the war dragged on, however, more and more recruits were needed. In March 1916 the Military Service Act came into force, which meant that all men between 18 and 41 years of age could be called up. The only people who didn't have to join the armed forces were those working in certain 'reserved' occupations, such as mining and farming.

Some people's beliefs led them to stand out against war. They were called 'conscientious objectors' and there were around 900 of them in Wales. Some believed that they couldn't kill their fellow men on religious grounds. Others thought that the war was a war between the bosses rather than the common workers, who were suffering on both sides. For both of these groups, war was evil and they were willing to suffer and even die in opposing it.

Conscientious objectors were often treated with anger by members of the public and the press. Some were publicly handed white feathers, a symbol of cowardice.

Conscientious objectors had to appear in front of Government Tribunals to argue their case and prove that they were genuinely against war on grounds of conscience. The tribunals included local people such as shop-keepers and landowners, and at least one former military officer. Tribunals could come to one of three decisions: to reject the case, in which case they had to enlist or were imprisoned; to allow the person to undertake non-combatant service (such as an ambulance driver); or to let them do other work of 'national importance' (for instance agriculture or forestry).

Some conscientious objectors were willing to undertake alternative service. Others – the 'absolutists' – refused to do any work that supported the war effort, and they had a particularly hard time. They were imprisoned in very harsh conditions, refused visits from their families and required to do hard labour, such as breaking stones. Most weren't released until 1919, until after the war was well over, and it could then be difficult for them to get a job.

Imagine you have to make the choice whether or not to fight in a war that you feel is wrong. What do you do?

What choices do you have to make, and what might make you compromise? (for instance, do you have a family? What effect may your choices have on them?)

Case Study 1

Thomas Evan Nicholas (Niclas y Glais)



Thomas Evan Nicholas was born on October 8th, 1879 in the Preseli Hills, Pembrokeshire. Times were hard. There were 6 children in the family, and his home was a rented smallholding. The landlords called from time to time to ensure the money was paid. The community of the Preseli Hills represented an ideal for Niclas – a community where people cooperated for each other's good. It was a civilized society where ideas, stories, debates, sermons and politics were shared. Niclas was introduced to what was happening in Parliament by the newspaper '*Baner ac Amserau Cymru*'.

Early in his life he became aware that the 'system' was unfair – 'the system' being the way society was ordered. Niclas believed that the traditional 'fairness' of Welsh people – their sense of 'fair play' – was their contribution to the world.

When the First World War broke out, Niclas was a minister in Llangybi, Cardiganshire. He could not see war as part of Christ's teaching, and preached against it every Sunday. Policemen were sent to listen to his sermons. Because of his anti-war stance, he had a tough time, but surprisingly he wasn't arrested.

In 1918, he was selected as the Independent Labour Party (I.L.P.) candidate for the seat of Aberdare. He is said to have lost the election when he was asked, 'Would you shake hands with a German?' and he replied, 'Of course. Why ever not?'.

By the time the Second World War came the authorities seized the opportunity to take Niclas to court in 1939 when the 'Emergency Powers (Defence) Act' became law. This law allowed the authorities to imprison anyone who 'impaired the war effort'. Niclas and his son, Islwyn, were accused of being Fascists, although both were Socialists! When Niclas and Islwyn were in Brixton jail, the surrounding area was regularly bombed. They were locked in their cells without any light while the German planes circled overhead. They were imprisoned in the area kept for 'Aliens' (i.e. foreigners) and were not allowed to go to the shelters like the other prisoners, but had to stay put as the prison shook.

While in prison, Niclas practised the craft of the sonnet, since the 14 lines of a sonnet fitted perfectly on a piece of toilet paper! These were later published as '*Canu'r Carchar*' (and translated into English as 'Prison Sonnets').

Questions to Consider:

1. Why was Niclas against war?
2. Do you think he was brave or foolish?
3. How do you think it felt to be in prison with an air raid going on overhead?

Case Study 2:

Ithel Davies

Ithel Davies was a barrister from the Aberystwyth area. He was a conscientious objector and an 'Absolutist', which meant that he wasn't willing either to enlist in the armed forces or to contribute in any way to the war effort. Men such as him were subject to harsh treatment, partly because of the fear that they might influence others. He belonged to the 'No Conscription Fellowship' (a movement which campaigned against conscription) and had encouraged a number of men in his area to join the movement and take part in its activities.

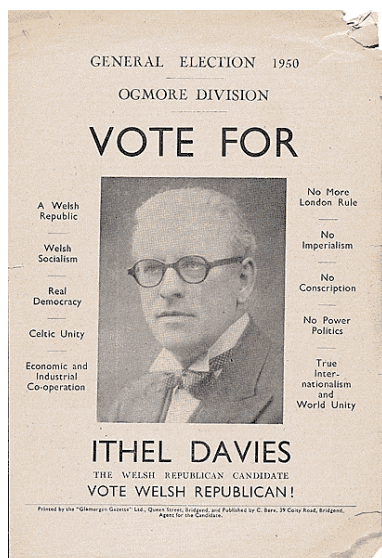
Why did he refuse?

Ithel's reasons for refusing to join up or to do anything that would aid the war effort can be seen in an article in **the Llangollen Advertiser on 28th July, 1916.**

PRIVATE ITHIEL DAVIES. "POET AND IDEALIST." CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR" COURT-MARTIALLED. On Friday Pte. Ithel Davies, aged 22, of the 4th R.W.F., was tried by court-martial at Park Hall Camp, Oswestry, with refusing to obey the orders of his superior officers. The accused handed in a written statement, which was read by the President. In it, Davies stated that he objected on conscientious grounds to all military work, combatant or non-combatant. He had refused to take the military declaration, and he claimed that as a conscientious objector he was entitled by Act of Parliament, to be exempt from such work. He had complied with all that he was required by law to do as a conscientious objector. His father had a large farm, and he (accused) was willing and anxious to return there and engage in what he considered to be work of national importance. He was charged with disobeying the lawful command of his superior officer, which did not apply to him, because, although he was in uniform, he was not a soldier, but a civilian. He based his objection on the definite Christian belief of love and brotherhood, and he would rather die a martyr's death than "betray the spirit within".

What happened to him as a result of his stand?

Because Ithel Davies refused to obey any military orders – e.g. to wear military uniform, go on parade or sew sandbags – he was subject to harsh treatment, particularly during his time in Mold military camp. He was put in a straightjacket for 6 hours (the permitted limit being 2 hours), was beaten up and had his nose broken. The matter was taken to Parliament, where questions were asked of the War Secretary. He was sentenced to prison and hard labour a number of times. He was eventually released in April 1919.



After the war he became a barrister. He was also interested in politics, and he stood for the Labour Party in 1935 and for the Welsh Republican Party in 1950.

Questions to Consider:

1. What do you think of Ithel Davies' stand?
2. Put yourself in his shoes. Why did he persist despite his mistreatment?
3. Put yourself in the place of the officers who had to deal with Ithel. How might you feel and why?

Case Study 3:

Thomas Rees



At the start of the First World War Thomas Rees was Head of Bala College – Bangor. He was strongly opposed to the war, believing it was against his Christian beliefs, and spoke out openly against it. This was a brave thing to do as Bangor was in the constituency of David Lloyd George who promoted the War as a Government Minister and from 1916 as the British Prime Minister. Thomas Rees angered people who supported the war, which were the majority. He lost most of his students, someone spat in his face in the town, and he was thrown out of Bangor Golf Club.

During the war he was responsible for a magazine called 'Y Deyrnas' ('The Kingdom'). The magazine was a thorn in the side of the authorities, including articles, essays and poems by important pacifists. Thomas Rees also condemned the National Eisteddfod for being in favour of the war.

Perhaps the greatest tribute paid to Thomas was from the poet and scholar W.J. Griffith who was a member of the British Navy during the war. He said:

'I learnt to love him before I ever met him, because I received Y Deyrnas when I was abroad during the war; and until this day I believe that that paper was one of the main reasons why Wales didn't completely lose her soul during a time of huge madness.'

Questions to Consider:

1. *Imagine you felt really strongly about something that was happening in your school or community?*
2. *Do you think you would be able to stand up for your beliefs publicly – even if this meant you were called names or bullied?*
3. *What would support you and what would make things difficult?*

Case Study 4:

Emrys Hughes



Emrys Hughes was born in Tonypany, South Wales. He was in a teacher training college in Leeds at the beginning of World War I, and he followed the news with great concern. His Socialist beliefs led him to be convinced that war was wrong, and that ordinary people would suffer most. It became clear to him that – if conscription came – he would have to refuse to join up. He was summoned to appear in front of various officials, but his political objections to military service were dismissed and he was told to report for duty. He knew it was only a matter of time before he was arrested.

As he arrived at a railway station one day, he was handed over to the military authorities, and taken away. His refusal to obey military orders got him into trouble straight away; he would not call the sergeant major 'Sir' or undress for a medical examination. He was sent to a 'court martial' or military court; the sergeant-major told Emrys and other conscientious objectors that he hoped they would all be shot. He was sentenced to 9 months detention in a military prison.

So began a pattern that was repeated many times. Emrys stated his political opposition to war, and the military authorities tried to force him to become a soldier. He and his friends were ordered to put on uniforms; they refused. Emrys was dragged away, his feet kicked from under him, and his clothes torn off. The next day he refused again to put on the uniform, and was struck in the face and forcibly undressed. His head was shaved. The prisoners were taken outside and ordered to march and to carry a gun; when Emrys refused, he was pushed to the ground. Eventually they had no choice but to walk around in a circle for two hours, trying to resist the rhythm of the shouts of 'Left, right, left, right'.

Each act of resistance brought a punishment, for example missing dinner, or just having bread and water for a day. Much of the time, Emrys was locked up alone, and communication with other prisoners was forbidden. Until the end of the war in 1918, Emrys was tried and re-tried many times, given further sentences for his refusal to serve in the military, and moved to various different military and non-military prisons. His health suffered because of poor food and lack of sleep and fresh air. During the winter, cells were often bitterly cold, and infested with mice and cockroaches.

Throughout the war, Emrys remained true to his principles, whatever the consequences. He did this not only because of his personal beliefs, but also because he hoped it might encourage others. After the war, he returned to politics, and in 1946 became a Labour MP for Ayrshire in Scotland, which he represented in parliament until his death in 1969. He described his experiences in the First World War in a hand-written document which he called '*Journal of a Coward*'.

Questions to Consider:

1. Emrys called his account of his experiences in WWI '*The Journal of a Coward*'. Do you think he was a coward? Why / why not?
2. Why do you think that Emrys was treated as he was?

What would you do?

This is a whole-class interactive activity. Preferably, it should be done in a large space which enables students to move around.

Read each of the statements below slowly. Students imagine that they are a young man (woman) during WWI. After each statement students should consider whether they will join up or not. They either remain standing where they are, or cross over to the other side of the room, according to their decision.

Encourage students to make their own decisions, rather than to do the same thing as their friends. At the end of the activity, have a discussion about how students felt. What persuaded them to act in one way or another?

1. It's 1914 and war has just broken out. You belong to a chapel where the minister preaches that killing others is wrong.
2. You are 28 years of age and in good health.
3. You are married with 2 little girls. You are a school teacher.
4. You see these posters around the town (WWI propaganda posters).
5. Quite a few young men from your street have already signed up and your little brother (22 years old) is really keen to enlist. They are excited about the war and say it will be over before Christmas.
6. It's 1915. You have the choice to join the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) or the Friends Ambulance Unit (FAU) which means that you wouldn't have to fight, but you could help those who are injured.
7. Most of your friends have now gone. A woman who passes you in the street starts shouting at you, calling you 'conchie', and gives you a white feather.
8. It's 1916 and a Law has come in (the Military Service Act) that says that every man between 18 and 42 **must** enlist. If you still feel you can't enlist on the basis of conscience you can take your case to a tribunal, but you will more than likely have to do work that supports the war effort – or be sentenced to prison and hard labour.
9. One of your daughters supports you. Your wife says that the other one wants you to fight. She is ashamed of you, and her friends are nasty to her in school.
10. You hear that Conscientious Objectors are being sent to France where they will be shot if they refuse to fight.

The Tribunal – Roles

Sergeant Williams

You've been at the Front and have seen a number of young men from your area die. The War Office is putting pressure on you to get more recruits.

Mrs Beti Jones

You've already lost two sons in the war, and the third one has just gone out to France. You feel very angry that some men are trying to stay 'safe' whilst so many are dying.

Revd Wyn Thomas

Your church supports the war as a 'just war'. Given the mass deaths, however, you have your doubts.

Mr Aled Edwards

You are a teacher and a neighbour of the defendant. You know that he is sincere and that he has strong religious / political beliefs. You also know that his health isn't good.

Mr Penri Evans

You are a farmer. You support the war, but you are also worried that there aren't enough people left to do the necessary work on the land. You're in a rush today because the farm is calling.

Mr Handel Griffiths

You are an important local businessman. You think that everyone has a duty to stand side by side with Belgium, and support smaller countries against attacks from powerful countries like Germany.

Conscientious Objectors Today

Joe Glenton - A Former British Soldier who served in Afghanistan.

Joe was 23 years old when he went to Kandahar in 2006 as part of the Royal Logistic Corps and a driver. When he joined the army he wished to serve his country. He believed in Britain as a free and democratic society.

During his seven months' service the way he saw Britain's involvement in Afghanistan changed. *'We knew civilians were being bombed and how the war was being conducted,' he said. 'It was conducted in a climate of racism and indifference to the Afghan people, completely at odds with how it's sold at home. I came back and because of those things, I thought, "No, this isn't right".'*

Joe was the first British soldier to publically refuse to serve in Afghanistan. He raised his objection with a senior officer, but was called a 'coward' and a 'malingerer'. He claims that he was bullied and harassed. His request was turned down and he was told that he would return to Afghanistan anyway. He absconded and spent two years fleeing from the army before giving himself up. He was sentenced to 9 months' prison. He has since left the army.

Objecting on grounds of conscience wasn't easy, he said, but he was too disenchanted with the supposed reasons for going to war and the way it was being conducted to continue.

(See: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8551245.stm>)

Omar Sa'ad

A member of the Arab Druze community in Israel and a Conscientious Objector.

Omar Sa'ad is a musician, and comes from the town of Maghar in Northern Israel and belongs to the Druze community, an Arab (Palestinian) minority. He objects to compulsory military service as this could force him to take arms against fellow human beings.

Between 2012 and 2014 Omar was sentenced to imprisonment seven times (150 days in prison each time) for refusing to fight. He was refused the right to legal representation during his imprisonment.

In a public statement, Omar said: *'I refuse to serve in the Israeli army. I call for respect for my faith and not to have to do things that are contrary to my conscience and my principles. I wish to be released.'* In June 2014 he was officially released from military service by the Israeli authorities, although they didn't recognise his status as a conscientious objector.

(See: <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/1.589726>)