

SOURCE 4

A letter from the No Conscription Fellowship written in December 1915

(PRO ref: HO 45/10782)

HOW TO USE THIS SOURCE TO HELP YOU ANSWER THE BIG QUESTION :

Look carefully at this source and consider what it tells you about why conscription was introduced and how people were affected by it. You should consider:

ASK YOURSELF:

- Why did the No Conscription Fellowship write this letter at this particular time?
- What is the letter saying?
- Why are they opposed to conscription?
- Do you get the impression these people are prepared to suffer for their beliefs?
- The newspapers often accused the opponents of conscription of being cowards who did not want to fight. Does this source support that view?

SOURCE 4

December 18, 1915.

Dear Sir,

We understand that on Tuesday next Parliament may discuss the issue of Conscription arising out of the recent Recruiting Campaign organised by Lord Derby.

We have addressed you before upon this matter, but in view of the exceedingly grave decision Parliament may be called upon to make we feel it incumbent upon us again to draw your attention to the grave violation of religious and conscientious belief which would be entailed in any system of compulsion enforced for the purpose of carrying on war.

Believing in the sacredness of human life, we are bound to refuse, even though faced with penalties, to take part, directly or indirectly, in the slaughter of our fellow men, nor can we undertake to submit to any form of alternative service: we therefore re-affirm our decision to remain true to our conviction whatever may be the determination at which Parliament arrives in this controversy.

Consequently, we have felt it desirable that we should again acquaint you with these facts.

Yours faithfully

CLIFFORD ALLEN, Chairman.

EDWARD GRUBB, Hon. Treasurer.

A. FENNER BROCKWAY, Hon. Secretary.

W. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Hon. Organiser.

WALTER H. AYLES

A. BARRATT BROWN

J. P. F. FLETCHER

MORGAN JONES

C. H. NORMAN

LEYTON RICHARDS

} Committee.