

conscientious objection

Walter Hohnrodt **Teacher's notes**

ΩThe aim of this task is to encourage students to investigate a range of original documents relating to the wartime experiences of a particular Conscientious Objector. Students will look at the letters, transcripts and official documents that tell the story of Walter Hohnrodt's Objection, as well as investigating some of the reasons behind his treatment during the war. By interpreting these documents they can examine how CO's arrived at their ideas, how the authorities reacted to them and how German immigrants were treated in Britain during the war.

Sources [here](#)

After examining the documents the student task is to produce a discussion of Walter Hohnrodt's wartime experiences, especially how he may have thought and felt about the military. This could be in the form of a short essay. However, there are many other ways of engaging with this task - students may be encouraged to use other media in creating podcasts, videos, radio or TV style interviews or produce newspaper articles, creative projects or propaganda in a contemporary style.

General prompt questions for use with each document:

Who wrote this document?

When was it written?

Why was it written?

What is the purpose of this source?

Does the source show the writers opinions and values?

What is the intended audience for each document?

Does it link to other documents in the collection?

Does it agree or disagree with other documents?

More specific questions on each source are included in the resource guide document.

Working in Groups

In place of the background information given above, teachers may wish students to work in small groups to uncover the narrative of Walter's experiences for themselves. Students may start work by looking at some of the documents in small groups, or pairs, before comparing with another group. As Conscientious Objection can be a complicated topic, it is still advisable that students have access to some of the background material and prompt questions.

Extension:

After working through the resources and following the guidance questions, students should be encouraged to compare their own interpretations of the material. This can generate discussion about the reliability of some of the evidence, and the fairness of the Tribunal system. Interesting extension tasks may be to assess the origins of anti-German feeling, or how racism of this kind affected Walter's application for exemption.

Students could also use other resource packs provided by the PPU to look further into the background of COs, or into their wartime experiences after a Tribunal hearing.

Resources:

The range of resources presented above provides a wide range of possible tasks and ap-

proaches. Teachers may wish to use these resources to explore other issues or concepts. More material can be requested from the PPU to support different tasks through the links below.

Sources used:

Source 1: Extract from 1911 Census © Crown Copyright

Sources 2 and 3: National Archives Record MH 47/38/82 © Crown Copyright

Sources 4 and 5: PPU Archives

Source 6: Essex Newsman extract, British Newspaper Archive © Local World Limited

Sources 7-9: Public domain

National Curriculum:

This pack is suitable for Key Stages 4 and 5.

The pack is suggested for use in Citizenship, English, Ethics, General Studies and History

Contact:

The Peace Pledge Union offers school visits within London, talks and workshops aimed at a variety of age groups and subjects from years 5 - 13. These sessions can be tailored to specific class and school educational needs.

For more information, supporting documents and other educational material, please contact

<http://www.ppu.org.uk/contactform.html>