

RELUCTANT ABSOLUTIST:
MALCOLM SPARKES' CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTIONS
TO WORLD WAR I

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ABSTRACT

The existing secondary literature has treated the appearance of World War I conscientious objectors (COs) before the tribunals as rather straightforward and uncomplicated. As the case of Malcolm Sparkes indicates, the process was much less straightforward and much more complex. The arduous process also shows that the power of the local tribunals was enlarged and that of the Pelham Committee reduced, due to the wrong decision – as the government acknowledged – by the local tribunal at Slough. The decision resulted in Sparkes becoming a reluctant or alternativist absolutist, a nomenclature hitherto ignored in the literature. Sparkes' case also suggests that at least some Quaker and other nonconformist COs should be viewed through the prism of the Fellowship of Reconciliation rather than through the prism of the No-Conscription Fellowship or the Friends Service Committee.

KEYWORDS

Conscientious Objector, conscription, Quaker, Malcolm Sparkes, Fellowship of Reconciliation, integrated pacifism, reluctant absolutist

After the battle of Waterloo, won with militia-based forces, Britain, in contrast to continental Europe, regularly suspended the annual Military Ballot Act – in fact, abolished it in 1860 – and had no military conscription during the nineteenth century, relying on professional soldiers and voluntary recruitment.¹ Not until after the Boer War did compulsory military service become a topic in the political arena, vigorously pursued by the National Service League. Liberal sentiment and trade unionist fear of industrial conscription, however, impeded implementation. Enthusiastic enlistment at the outbreak of World War I also muted the call for conscription momentarily. However, the call for conscription became more strident when the conscriptionists gained political influence in Prime Minister Asquith's May 1915 coalition cabinet, the number of volunteers declined, the casualties enormously

increased, and the size of the army was enlarged. Even so, Asquith did not introduce a military service bill to parliament until 5 January 1916. The delay can be explained by the fact that Asquith needed time to prevent the break-up of his cabinet, ensure both popular and parliamentary support, and promise organised labour that industrial conscription would not be included.²

After Asquith's 1915 political manoeuvring, the passage of the Military Service Act through parliament was quick, although the amendment by Quaker MPs Edmund Harvey and Arnold Rowntree, allowing for exemption on grounds of conscientious objection, caused considerable debate, especially concerning the inclusion of non-religious objection. Harvey and Rowntree intended to exempt COs from all military service, but the adopted amendment was clumsily worded in the bill, stating that, 'Any certificate of exemption may be absolute, conditional, or temporary, as the Military Service tribunal think best suited to the case, and in the case of an application on conscientious grounds may take the form of an exemption from combatant duty only'.³ Although the act was further amended and clarified, the ambiguity remained. Conscientious objectors and tribunal members would interpret the wording differently, the former emphasising the first part of the amendment, the latter the second part. Furthermore, some COs (the absolutists) thought that their credo gave them the right to be exempted from all military or non-military service, while other COs (the alternativists) were willing to do some other kind of service. When in July 1916, at the beginning of the Somme offensive, Malcolm Sparkes appeared before his local tribunal asking for a certificate of exemption, the Military Service Act had been in place for several months. Like thousands of others, he thought he had a right to absolute exemption from all military service. He based his arguments on two intimately related grounds: his pacifism and his work.

What seemed to be a routine case turned out to be much more complex, ultimately resulting in the seemingly contradictory position of alternative absolutist CO. The secondary literature has generally treated appeals as a fairly uncomplicated, straightforward issue. Sparkes' case indicates that this view is too simplistic. Moreover, the literature has largely viewed COs through the prism of the No-Conscription Fellowship (NCF), the large and voluble political pressure group led by Clifford Allen.⁴ Organised in November 1914, the NCF approached conscription from a secular and often adversarial perspective. Although one of the NCF co-founders was Rev. Leyton Richards, later a general secretary of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the majority of FOR members, including Sparkes, disagreed ideologically and methodologically with the NCF, favouring instead co-operation and reconciliation, ideas they felt were incompatible with political pressure, which they regarded as a source of disharmony. They were often willing to find alternative work, yet ended up in prison. They could be classified as reluctant or alternative absolutists, a position the literature has ignored. In following Sparkes' long, circuitous and subjective process not only the extent of the power of the tribunals and the limits of authority of the Committee of Work of National Importance (the Pelham Committee) will become apparent, but also some basic tenets of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Britain's most prominent Christian pacifist organisation, which influenced several of Sparkes' key ideas.

Born on 14 October 1881 in Rochdale, Lancashire, Malcolm Sparkes was the eldest son of yarn salesman Joseph John Sparkes and Mary Sophia Pollard, whose father had been one of the contributors to *A Reasonable Faith* of 1884, a book that contributed to the downfall of the dominant Quaker evangelicalism and the rise of theological modernism.⁵ After attending Religious Society of Friends schools at Ackworth and Bootham, he entered in 1898 H.C. Cleaver's architectural wood workers' firm in London, attaining the position of managing director, a position he relinquished in the summer of 1916, when it conflicted with his view of pacifism. In 1910 he married Elizabeth Jackson (1882–1969) of Kendal, Westmorland, settling at Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire. They became the parents of two daughters and two sons. Before the war he was involved in some Quaker peace activities at Jordans, the burial place of renowned early Quaker William Penn, an involvement he mentioned at his tribunal trials. However, there is no evidence of the integration of pacifism and social issues that became so prominent at his trials.

As manager Sparkes became involved in labour disputes in the building industry, notably those of the tempestuous first half of 1914.⁶ He achieved only limited success in keeping his company out of the industrial strife and as a result came to regard the existing adversarial labour-management system as fundamentally flawed. For the rest of his life he tried to find a different approach to labour-management relations.⁷ While during the strife he had been able to hone his practical skills as negotiator, he missed as yet the ideological underpinnings he felt he needed. Two conferences, at Llandudno and Cambridge, were crucial to his theoretical thinking, helping him in his development towards a new type of pacifism: integrated pacifism.⁸

Months before the war broke out a number of Quaker organisations had decided to hold a September conference in Llandudno, Wales. A memorandum circulating among the committee members indicates that a wide variety of topics were to be discussed, including, among others, the demands of labour, the meaning of democracy, the women's movement, modern mysticism, and the influence of science. This extensive range of topics was not unusual for reform-minded Quakers, some of whom had formed in 1898 the Socialist Quaker Society and had begun publishing in 1912 the quarterly *Ploughshare*, a public forum for their progressive ideas. They were part of a larger Christian movement interested in social reform, including the Student Christian Movement and the Swanwick Free Church Fellowship.⁹ Sharing similar interests the organising Llandudno committee decided to invite other Nonconformists to speak at the conference.

The conference's broad spectrum found its unity in the question 'Is [Jesus'] Gospel a satisfactory message of life and hope in India and China, as well as to England and America, to the toiler and the outcast as well as to the comfortable middle classes...?' By the time the conference was actually held, 25–30 September, this question had become fused with the problem of war. The discussions indicate that there was much confusion about the understanding of the precise nature of war and peace. In the words of H.G. Wood, an influential friend and tutor at Woodbrooke, the conferees 'met in much perplexity' and failed to 'arrive at any judgment on the situation which [they] could offer for the guidance of the Society or the public'. Wood's negative assessment notwithstanding, the conference could still be termed a success. The

conferees reaffirmed the traditional Quaker position on war, tentatively linked pacifism with socio-economic affairs, and were so reinvigorated that they decided to hold meetings to acquaint other Friends with the positive views expressed at the conference. The success, certainly for Sparkes, was partly due to the Presbyterian Rev. Richard Roberts. His two speeches, whose 'epigrammatic style captured attention throughout', were acclaimed as the most impressive.¹⁰ The speeches set Sparkes on the road to his integrated pacifism.

The Llandudno Committee's resolve to invite non-Quakers led to another conference, held 28–31 December 1914, in Cambridge. It was during this conference that the Fellowship of Reconciliation was formed. Those present, including Malcolm Sparkes, were inspired by the words of conference chairman Rev. Richard Roberts, who posited that they were in the world for the business of reconciliation, and that pacifism and non-resistance were by-products of the positive force of Peace conceived as Love. Roberts' inspiring address was reflected in the adoption of a five-point basis for the new organisation, including the principle which Sparkes would use and paraphrase before the tribunals: 'That Love, as revealed and interpreted in the life and death of Jesus Christ... is the only power by which evil can be overcome'. Furthermore, it was 'incumbent upon those who believe in this principle... to establish a world-order based on Love'. As a consequence of this principle, Christians were 'forbidden to wage war' and called instead to 'a life service for the enthronement of Love in personal, social, commercial and national life'. The discussions at Cambridge were as broad ranging as the presentations at Llandudno, but for the FOR it was crucial that social, economic, political, and theological views were more fully united with pacifism. Indeed, what made the FOR unique was that pacifism was integral to its world-and-life view. Significantly, with reconciling love as its basic premise the majority of FOR members regarded political pressure as an incompatible method. This novel understanding became the basis for Sparkes' ideas on industrial reconstruction and in 1918, while imprisoned, he acknowledged the influence of the conferences on his brand of guild socialism in a letter to FOR chairman Henry Hodgkin: 'The Industrial Parliament scheme... is essentially the child of the F.O.R. It is the direct impact... of the F.O.R. principles in all the tremendous power and freshness of those opening meetings at Llandudno and Cambridge... The debt that the Industrial Parliament owes to the F.O.R. can never be overstated'.¹¹ Long before he wrote those words Sparkes had to appear several times before tribunals to explain his conscientious objections.

Although the FOR helped its members before their tribunal appearance, it regarded conscription a secondary issue. In fact, it did not even discuss the problem of conscription in its literature until June 1915, probably in response to the formation of the coalition cabinet in May 1915 that included several proponents of conscription. The FOR's pacifist world-and-life view made war unacceptable and thus presumably conscription as well. Yet the implications of conscription had never been thoroughly debated and perhaps left to the NCF, for whom conscription was the primary focus. The first to discuss conscription was J. St George Heath, a prominent FOR member and a lecturer on social subjects at Woodbrooke, who contrasted state coercion to ensure national service with the voluntary dedication in the service

of humanity.¹² The ensuing discussion made it clear that the FOR did not as yet have an official policy on conscription. Only gradually was such a policy worked out, and by the time the military service bill was introduced in January 1916 the FOR had taken a definite stand. It established a conscription committee, began working together with the No-Conscription Fellowship and the Friends Service Committee in the Joint Advisory Committee, established in early January 1916,¹³ and sent letters to its members of military age affected by the Military Service Act. The result was open conflict with the government: 'We refuse to participate in war, whether voluntary or under compulsion, because our submission to Jesus Christ and our salvation through Him commit us to an endeavour to bring in His Kingdom in His way'.¹⁴ The key to the FOR approach was its understanding of the Kingdom of God. Peace was a concomitant of this Kingdom and could only come if ends and means were in harmony, an idea Sparkes was trying to implement in his industrial parliament scheme. Although co-operating with the NCF, the FOR eschewed the primarily political strategy of the NCF, viewing its approach as deliberately confrontational. Such a method, it argued, contained the seeds of further violence. In contrast, it called for peaceful ways to convince opponents. The different methods help explain why the FOR did not experience the same kind of crisis between absolutists and alternativists as the NCF. The FOR was aiming for an attitude expressing 'peace of mind', which was, as will be seen shortly, exemplified by the imprisoned Sparkes.

By the time Sparkes had to appear before the local tribunal in July 1916 he was well prepared: he had been actively involved in local peace work of the Religious Society of Friends for a number of years; the Llandudno and Cambridge conferences had inspired him with a theological and non-adversarial perspective, and he had started working on a reconciliation scheme for labour and management in the building industry in which he tried to apply his integrated pacifist principles. Furthermore, he was well informed about the procedures, for on 13 June 1916 the FOR had sent a four-page letter with important information about the new Military Service Act.¹⁵ It stated, for instance, that application for exemption 'should be sent to the Clerk of the local Tribunal for the district in which you reside *not later than June 23rd*... [and that] a man who had properly made claim for exemption cannot legally be called up to serve in the Army until the claim has been finally disposed of by the Tribunals'. For those interested in alternative work it listed various possibilities, but warned that while 'other kinds of work may be submitted for consideration of the Committees, ... it is seldom that other... kinds are sanctioned'. As a Friend who was attempting to bring about co-operation in the volatile building industry, Sparkes seemed to have the necessary pre-requisites to obtain a certificate of exemption. But in a country at war, the ultimate adversarial encounter, these qualifications were not necessarily sufficient, partly because the military required more men, partly because the attitude towards conscientious objectors had begun to harden, and partly because the tribunal system had still some unresolved flaws that could victimise a person like Malcolm Sparkes.

Initially the Military Service Act, becoming law on 27 January and operative on 10 February, deemed only unmarried men between eighteen and forty-one 'to have been duly enlisted in His Majesty's regular forces... for the period of the war'. A

second Act in May 1916 also included married men.¹⁶ The act provided four types of exemptions: national expediency, serious hardship, ill health, and conscience. A tribunal system was put in place to assess the validity of an application for exemption. Schematically the system looked simple. The applicant would first appear before one of the about 2000 local tribunals. These could deny the application's validity completely or grant either conditional or unconditional exemption. Applicants disagreeing with the decision had the right to appeal to one of the 85 appeal tribunals, but had to ask leave from this tribunal to appeal to the Central Tribunal. Conditional exemptions could take different forms. Applicants who objected to killing but not to other military duties could be placed in the non-combatant corps (NCC).¹⁷ Others were willing to accept alternative service, meaning 'work of national importance', such as forestry, agriculture, transport, sanitary services, education or shipbuilding. Still others could conditionally be exempted on working in the Friends' Ambulance Unit (FAU), a voluntary civilian Quaker organisation working on the battlefield.¹⁸ What constituted acceptable alternative work was decided by the Committee on Work of National Importance, established on 28 March and chaired by the assistant secretary at the Board of Trade, T.H.W. Pelham. While the Pelham Committee decided on the type of acceptable work, the Home Office Scheme under Labour MP William Brace, under-secretary of state, attempted, not entirely successfully, to organise this acceptable alternative work of national importance under civilian control. As Sparkes' case makes clear, the process could be more complex than the scheme hinted at.

When in July 1916 Sparkes' case came before the local tribunal at Slough, the tribunals had experienced an extremely heavy work load trying to process the more than half a million applications for certificates of exemption. Often the tribunals had very little time for an applicant, making it sometimes difficult for him to present his point of view adequately. Not surprisingly, especially after the hasty drafting and the limited time to implement the system,¹⁹ there had been a number of problems, some of which had been solved, but others which had not. For instance, the Pelham Committee's list on work of national importance was not circulated until two months after the tribunals were convened and the tribunals referred few conditionally exempted COs to it. Some tribunals ignored governmental directions and clarifications. Sometimes the wording of the exemptions was ambiguous, causing some COs who had received exemptions from local tribunals to be arrested as deserters. The Asquith government had hoped that the tribunals themselves could solve these problems, which indeed was usually the case, although, as Sparkes' case will indicate and the government acknowledged, a tribunal could arrive at a wrong solution. Not surprising either is that COs accused tribunal members of bias and incompetence. According to John Rae, 'The evidence does not support this interpretation. There is no doubt that the tribunal members made errors of judgement and administration, and that these errors were sometimes inspired by prejudice, but when the work of the tribunal is seen in the context of conscription as a whole, the limitations of the tribunal members seem relatively unimportant'.²⁰ As a correction to John W. Graham's accusation of conspiracy in *Conscription and Conscience*, the semi-official Quaker response to the war, Rae's comment is justified,²¹ but for individuals it was

definitely not 'relatively unimportant': they could be imprisoned for several years, as happened to Malcolm Sparkes.

Sparkes' appearances before the various tribunals lasted several months, in stark contrast to, for instance, fellow Quaker and FOR member Stephen Hobhouse, who refused any appeal.²² At his first appearance, at Slough, Sparkes asked for unconditional exemption on two grounds: conscience and business.²³ While his written submission has not survived, much can be pieced together from other sources, notably *The Friend*. He opened his submission with a statement of respect, expressing his 'admiration for the brave men who have joined the colours under a high sense of duty'. Sparkes' sentiment was similar to the opening of the very first FOR pamphlet *To Christ's Disciples Everywhere*, published in January 1915: 'With what glorious self-abandon are men to-day offering their lives in the service of their nation!' Cynics could easily interpret this as mere rhetoric, but such an interpretation would miss the real key: tolerance, a notion running through much FOR and Quaker literature. Not the soldier – the human being – was condemned, but the system – sin – was.²⁴ After his opening sentence Sparkes pointed out that he took a stand 'for the sacredness of human life and for the now sadly discredited cause of international brotherhood'. Any member of the NCF could have spoken such words. What set him apart from the secular NCF members was his 'witness for the heroic Christianity of Jesus Christ; for the belief that the only way to overcome evil, is to conquer it by indomitable love and unwearied service'. Pacifism was founded upon 'faith and constructive goodwill' with significant consequences for the 'social, industrial or international' spheres. While many Quakers used similar phraseology, Sparkes' words reflected point 1 of the FOR's *The Basis*: 'That Love, as revealed and interpreted in the life and death of Jesus Christ, ... is the only power by which evil can be overcome', and of point 3: 'That...our loyalty to our country...and to Jesus Christ, our Lord and Master, calls us...to a life service for the enthronement of Love in personal, social, commercial and national life'. Ironically, while the Quaker Renaissance emphasised a modernist, non-literal approach to Scripture, Sparkes, like so many FOR members and Quakers, held to a 'literal interpretation of [his] Master's orders – "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you"'. He realised that this approach could and did lead to sufferings and mentioned a few, including his significantly reduced income, but only to indicate that his stance was much more than 'merely passive resistance'. Sparkes rejected here the so often levelled accusation that pacifists stood for doing nothing. Such a view represented only the negative side, which 'fades into comparative insignificance beside the positive side'. Pacifism was an activity that had to be applied to every department of life.²⁵ Sparkes acknowledged that others would view such a belief as 'hopelessly Utopian and idealist, ...[but] someone must try to make a beginning'. He himself was 'anxious to take [his] place amongst those beginners'. He reinforced his ideological statements with references to his pre-war pacifist activities, including those at Jordans.²⁶

Superficially, Sparkes' second ground, his business activities, was strong. Towards the close of 1914 his co-director and major shareholder H.C. Cleaver had decided to make packing cases for the Ministry of Munitions. Such work qualified Sparkes for a

war service badge, which would have exempted him completely from the Military Service Act. He felt, however, that such acceptance would have compromised his principles. In fact, he had refused to be involved in this work or to accept any profits from it. Since the company initially had continued to do a large amount of civilian work, Sparkes had felt obliged to remain with the firm.²⁷ But by the summer of 1916 this civilian work had dwindled significantly. In order to help his country in ways compatible with his principles, he had begun 'the study of some of the industrial problems'. With renewed industrial unrest, he had contacted some leading trade unionists about a 'National Industrial Parliament for the Building Industry', which had 'met with a very favourable reception' and which he thought was 'the highest national service that [he] could render to [his] country at this time'. As far as he was concerned, the scheme was the 'serving love' in industrial affairs. Unquestionably he alluded to his initiative of 8 March 1916, when he sent a letter to S. Stennett, the secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, containing the embryonic idea of labour reconciliation: an Industrial Council in the building industry as an avenue for permanent co-operation. In April he had an opportunity to explain his ideas orally to the Society's National Executive in Manchester, which in turn presented it at the National Association Building Trades Council in June.²⁸

Sparkes' presentation was an expression of a vision of a new world, a post-millennial view of the Kingdom of God. Given this vision it should be no surprise that FOR and Quaker literature are filled with such seemingly non-pacifist issues as social and industrial reorganisation, education, and rehabilitation of young offenders. For FOR members these issues were expressions of active, integrated pacifism. In spite of the ample time he got to present his views, the members of the tribunals failed to perceive this novel idea of pacifism, and so have historians. But to separate these social issues from pacifism is to misconstrue FOR pacifism.²⁹

At the end of the hearing the tribunal indicated that it was satisfied with the genuineness of his conscientious objections. On that basis Sparkes could have expected unconditional exemption. For whatever reason, the tribunal dismissed his appeal to business – it may not have grasped the full nature of the industrial peace proposal or have thought that others could carry on. While failing to comprehend the very principle on which the industrial parliament scheme was based, as did others later when his scheme became a guild socialist project, the tribunal was sufficiently impressed with the whole presentation to grant conditional exemption and refer him to the Pelham Committee to find work of national importance within twenty-eight days. The decision could hardly have come as a surprise, for since their inception local tribunals had been reluctant to grant absolute exemption, and Slough followed suit. Still, as Quaker Edmund Harvey, Liberal MP for Leeds West, observed in the House of Commons some months later, the tribunal 'acted in a spirit which I am sure Parliament did not intend'.³⁰ Although Harvey had co-sponsored the crucial CO exemption amendment and thus knew its intent, he may not exactly have reflected the government's anticipation that only very few COs would request absolute exemption.

Dissatisfied with the verdict, Sparkes, like so many others, decided to make use of his right and appeal for unconditional exemption. He fared no better on 2 August

1916 when the High Wycombe Appeal Tribunal heard his case. *The Friend* noted that he was not able to explain much, for the appeal was dismissed 'practically without examination'. While local tribunals were often so busy that they only had a limited time to hear cases, such an excuse can not be used for the Appeal Tribunal. The reason for the quick dismissal remains unknown. There is no indication that at this time he asked leave to appeal to the Central Tribunal. Unlike many other COs asking for absolute exemption, Sparkes was not an absolutist of the NCF chairman Clifford Allen type, who refused any compromise. He accepted his conditional exemption and presented his scheme before the Pelham Committee, which essentially agreed with the local tribunal's decision that his industrial reconstruction work was not of national importance. His type of work was not on the Committee's list and, as the four-page FOR letter had warned, it showed its reluctance to add another type. Instead, he was advised to find 'other employment, such as artificial limbs, aeroplanes, or agricultural machinery'. Sparkes requested and was granted an extension of time to find work of national importance.³¹

While Sparkes sought acceptable work, the Garton Foundation asked him to join its staff on a voluntary full-time basis. The Foundation was a non-profit organisation set up in 1912 to 'promote and develop the science of International Polity and economics as indicated in the published writings of Mr. Norman Angell'.³² With former Prime Minister Arthur Balfour, keeper of Queen Victoria's papers Viscount Esher, and wealthy manufacturer of brewer's sugar Sir Richard Garton as trustees, the Foundation had a dignity that contributed to the popularity and receptivity of Angellism. In 1916, however, Angell had broken ties with the Foundation, which was now carried on largely by John Hilton, who happened to be interested in industrial reconstruction. In fact, the Foundation was in the process of publishing a *Memorandum on the Industrial Situation After the War*, and Sparkes was asked to help refine it as well as his own industrial reconciliation scheme.³³ Sparkes submitted this request to the Pelham Committee, which 'decided to approve and to recommend him to the local tribunal for whole-time voluntary work under the direction of an educational trust, in which his time was to be devoted to the study of the relations of employers and employed in the particular trade in which Mr. Sparkes has special experience, and to do practical work in promoting better relations'. Thereupon Sparkes accepted the Foundation's offer and started work on 7 September, notifying the local tribunal of his new position.³⁴

Until this point his case was not unusual, but it took a twist on Wednesday 13 September, at the expiration of his extension. Summoned to appear before the local tribunal, he was informed that it had resolved, contrary to the Pelham Committee's decision, that work for the Garton Foundation was not of national importance, and that he now had been exempted from combatant service only, contrary to its own earlier decision exempting him from all military service. He was unable to discuss the matter further because 'before he had come into the room they [the tribunal members] had already discussed and decided the matter, and they could not reopen it'.³⁵ A comment by Hubert W. Peet, a Quaker as well as NCF and FOR member, may hint at the reason for the decision: 'apparently, should you be a conscientious objector no work is work of national importance if it is what you are already

engaged in'.³⁶ Although Peet referred to the Pelham Committee itself, many in the community regarded any work COs might do as a form of punishment, while they did not perceive staying within your own work as punishment. Since tribunal members represented their communities, they may have reflected community sentiment in this case as well. Furthermore, although Sparkes' work could be classified as educational, the tribunal members may have associated the Garton Foundation with Angells' now disgraced peace movement rather than with acting secretary John Hilton's industrial reconstruction.

Sparkes thought that the tribunal set an important precedent: it overruled the Pelham Committee; it did not refer the case back to that committee for further recommendation; it did not suggest another alternative; and it did not give Sparkes permission to find alternative work. Not surprisingly, Sparkes thought that the tribunal's decision placed him in an unfair position and, acting on legal advice, decided to appeal. His grounds were twofold:

- (a) That the Local Tribunal granted exemption on condition of undertaking work of national importance as recommended by the Pelham Committee, and that the condition having been complied with, the exemption is now operative, and that the applicant is entitled to his certificate of exemption in accordance therewith, and that the Local Tribunal had no power to make any variation thereof.
- (b) Alternatively that the Appeal Tribunal do grant a certificate upon terms of the applicant proceeding with the work of national importance recommended by the Pelham Committee.

Sparkes' appeal lends credence to John Graham's contention that the powers of the local tribunals had not been properly defined.³⁷ Not a legal expert himself, Sparkes had his legal counsel argue the first ground before the Aylesbury Appeal Tribunal on 12 October.³⁸ Four months earlier, on 5 June, the Central Tribunal had declared that the Pelham Committee could not overrule a decision of the local tribunals. The issue here was the reverse, whether or not a local tribunal had the legal power to reject the Pelham Committee's recommendation. According to the Appeal Tribunal, the local body had this power and hence dismissed the claim.

In parliament W. Hayes Fisher, the parliamentary secretary (shortly thereafter president) of the Local Government Board, who had been intimately involved in the interpretation of official policy to the tribunals since the military service bill went through parliament, acknowledged that the local tribunal's change was 'a very wrong decision'. Nevertheless, contrary to Sparkes' and MP Edmund Harvey's interpretation of the rules, Fisher said the tribunals had a perfect right to make such a decision: 'That power is with them'. That Harvey's interpretation appeared to be wrong is especially telling: he was a member of the Pelham Committee. It may be possible that he was wrong and tried to enlarge the role of the committee, which, as Rae has argued, had no real authority. There is another, more likely scenario. The Central Tribunal decision of 5 June and the Sparkes' case suggest that the committee's role was defined during the course of its existence. From this perspective it seems likely that Fisher confirmed the local tribunal's decision as part of that process. With Fisher putting his seal of approval to the decision, the local tribunals had

extended their power and reduced the advisory capacity of the Pelham Committee even more.³⁹

On 16 October Sparkes himself defended his second claim before the Aylesbury Appeal Tribunal.⁴⁰ He noted first that since the issue at hand was not a legal one and could involve matters of conscience, he had dispensed with professional assistance. He then explained the importance of the Industrial Parliaments' scheme on which he was working under the auspices of the Garton Foundation.⁴¹ Edmund Harvey, MP and Pelham Committee member, then gave evidence concerning the Pelham Committee and its interview with the secretary of the Garton Foundation.⁴² Finally, the Garton's *Memorandum on the Industrial Situation After the War* was introduced as evidence of Sparkes' work. Although the tribunal members were favourably impressed by the scheme, they argued that it had been developed to such an extent that other people could now further develop it. Sparkes, however, claimed that his work was only beginning. At that juncture the military representative brought up the seemingly irrelevant issue of Sparkes' business position at Cleaver's. Sparkes commented that he had been involved in its civil business, that he had refused to participate in its war production, and that he had never accepted any profit from Cleaver's contracts with the Ministry of Munitions. For further details he referred the military representative to the papers attached to the original appeal. Unable to explain his conscientious objections any further, he requested that his objections 'be re-examined, as, at present, you have only got a fraction of the truth'. His claim was dismissed and the request for permission to appeal to the Central Tribunal was refused. The military representative's seemingly irrelevant question took on new significance when he asked for a review by the local tribunal since he thought that Sparkes' business position was 'not consistent with a conscientious objection to war'. Since the war on the Western Front continued to go badly, the military representative seemed to be trying to recruit as many soldiers as possible, disregarding the spirit of the exemption allowed under the Military Service Act.

A little more than a week later, on 25 October, Edmund Harvey brought Sparkes' case (and that of artist Lawrence Deller) to the attention of the House of Commons, acknowledging that the topic was difficult to raise with the country 'occupied with the grave military situation and the measures taken to meet it'.⁴³ He gave an extensive overview of the case, noting that the tribunal's refusal to refer Sparkes back to the Pelham Committee had 'happened, fortunately, in only a few cases hitherto' out of 'between 1,000 and 2,000 cases' referred to it. The tribunals were 'entitled to disagree...when they are masters of their own decisions...', but it was unjust to put Sparkes in the Non-Combatant Corps 'after he had been previously exempted from all military service'. Concluding his review he submitted that, since Sparkes had been denied leave to appeal to the Central Tribunal,

from the point of view of the Local Government Board and of the War Office a situation like that is unsatisfactory. It is most undesirable that the military representative and the tribunal should force a man into a form of exemption which is to him no exemption at all, and compel him to choose between being unfaithful to his convictions, which were intended to be respected by parliament, and the alternative of having to defy the law or the application of it.

W. Hayes Fisher, parliamentary secretary of the Local Government Board, replied that though occasionally there were 'unseemly wrangles' which sometimes made him 'a little ashamed of the tribunals', they had on the whole 'shown singular impartiality'. He admitted that in Sparkes' case the tribunals made some wrong decisions, but when all was said and done, they had the power to do what they did. As he understood Harvey's account, which he implied to be one-sided, Sparkes' case was not serious enough to warrant the Local Government Board's intervention: 'my Department has no power, and ought not to have power, to interfere in such cases'. Fisher's comment seems to contradict the regulation of re-hearing of cases, section 2 of part III, which reads in part that 'a case may be re-heard...if some other reason which the Local Government Board consider to be sufficient has been shown for re-hearing'.

Fisher's comment may reflect the government's unwillingness to become involved and let the system itself work out the flaws. In his lengthy, critical rebuttal Fisher made an observation that struck at the heart of religion-based objection: 'I think that the use of Scripture on these occasions is singularly inopportune'. Whereas Sparkes had appealed to the literal interpretation of Jesus' love command, Fisher seemed to think that inappropriate: 'there is no good, as a rule, to quoting one text when another can quote a further text. After all, tribunals and applicants should act up to the spirit of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and if all acted up to that spirit, and not to the letter, we should not be occupied in discussing scenes of that kind'. Earlier in his reply Fisher had hinted that real conscientious objectors would fight 'the horrors that are being perpetrated by the German Army acting under Prussianism'. No wonder that Fisher was antipathetic to Sparkes' claims. His views did not bode well for Sparkes and many other conscientious objectors.

Denied government intervention, Sparkes had to appear on 3 November before the Slough Local Tribunal a third time.⁴⁴ The military representative grilled him with such questions as to 'whether he had signed cheques for wages, part of which would be paid to men engaged in war work, whether the Company had a common banking account for civil contracts and war contracts, and whether he had refused to give the local Military Authorities the names and addresses of men who had left the Company's service'. Most of the questions the military representative asked had already been asked before, and the answers were in the initial deposition. That Sparkes had left the company for conscientious reasons seemed irrelevant to him. In spite of the grilling, the tribunal decided to adhere to their first decision, showing that the members were not necessarily in cahoots with the military representative, as Graham and Boulton implied.⁴⁵ At that time Sparkes had appealed the decision; now the military representative did so. Thus Sparkes appeared before the Bucks County Appeal Tribunal on 10 November.⁴⁶ As *The Friend* briefly observed, 'The M.R. put the same series of questions and received the same replies as at the Local Tribunal on November 3rd, but the decision was reversed'. The full statement accompanying Sparkes' original application had apparently not been consulted. In spite of that, Sparkes was denied leave to appeal to the Central Tribunal. As a result he ended up not only getting less than he asked for, but also less than he originally received. As Hayes Fisher said, somewhat less complimentary in connection with Harvey's question in the Commons, 'This man was not satisfied with half a loaf and he wanted the

whole loaf. He tried to get the whole loaf and then he found that half the loaf was taken away from him'. Sparkes had now two choices, accept the verdict and become a member of the NCC or refuse and wait passively to be apprehended as an absentee soldier. He chose the latter and while he waited, the case took another twist.

On 9 December, two days after Lloyd George became Prime Minister, a letter from the government's Reconstruction Committee asked Sparkes to submit a private memorandum on the question dealing with the relationship between employer and employee. It is unclear who wrote the letter, perhaps J.H. Whitley, the chairman of the Sub-Committee on Relations between Employers and Employed. Whitley's committee was working on similar concerns as Sparkes. At any rate, the letter seems to have been a response to Sparkes' article 'National Industrial Parliaments', which appeared in the December issue of the FOR's monthly *The Venturer*. In effect, Sparkes was now asked to do the work for the government, which he had been doing for the Garton Foundation and which the tribunals had rejected as work of national importance! Obviously, different branches of the government's bureaucracy held different ideas about the significance of his work.⁴⁷

Sparkes' new work included the Committee's offer to help him get an exemption. It is clear that the offer was unsuccessful, for he was arrested as an absentee from the Non-Combatant Corps on Saturday 27 January 1917. On promising to appear on Monday morning before the Beaconsfield Police Court, he was left at liberty in order to complete the nearly finished memorandum. On appearing in court, he was fined, handed over to the military, taken by car to Wycombe and then to Cowley Barracks, Oxford. Shortly afterwards he was transferred to Cambridge Barracks, Portsmouth. While waiting there for his court-martial, Sparkes was subjected to solitary confinement in a large but cold basement (45 × 21 ft). His experience, he related on 5 February, gave him a new understanding of how the early Quakers must have felt.⁴⁸

With his case now transferred to the military he had to explain his position again, presenting at his court-martial at Portsmouth his two grounds for exemption as he had done before. But while before he had emphasised the positive, integrated nature of pacifism, there was now also a note of defiance: 'When ordered to put on my uniform I informed the sergeant-major that I was a member of the Society of Friends (commonly called Quakers), that I believed all war to be wrong, and that I must therefore respectfully decline to obey any military orders or to undertake any form of military service'. According to an obituary in *The Friend* of 21 April 1933, 'the value of his [Sparkes'] services was so extensively recognized that in February 1917, he was released unconditionally from prison'.⁴⁹ Actually, instead of being released he was sentenced to twenty-three months' hard labour, and, in accordance with Army Order X issued on 25 May 1916, he was now moved to a civil prison. Ironically, he was advised to take his case to the Army Council.⁵⁰ As with the war service badge, he rejected such preferential treatment 'so long as the Government continued to imprison men whose only crime was loyalty to their highest convictions'. The unusual advice in itself suggests a recognition, however faint, that Sparkes' case was out of the ordinary.

Instead of doing alternative work, he had now become an imprisoned absolutist. Ironically, Quakers had been in the forefront of nineteenth-century prison reform. This reform had included solitary confinement, which John Howard, the Nonconformist who could be regarded as its father, could reconcile in his own mind as combining the terror of a penalty and the benefits of humanity. Even Elizabeth Fry, who protested against it, recognising that it could cause nervousness, still thought it highly valuable if managed properly. But by 1914 this aspect of the reform had purely become an instrument of punishment.⁵¹ For some this punishment would be a hellish experience and lead to insanity; for Quakers like Sparkes, and to some others as well, it would be an opportunity to exemplify their pacifism.

The limited information about his prison experience elucidates again Quaker and FOR perspectives. He admitted in a letter from Wormwood Scrubs, written sometime before mid-May, that 'it ha[d] taken a good while to get "tamed" down to prison'. Even so, he had 'practically no moments of depression but very many of tremendous joy... It is a truly wonderful experience to be here'. While he agreed with someone's comment that Wormwood Scrubs was a 'spiritual university', he thought it was actually more than that: 'it is a spiritual power house, in which a veritable Niagara of energy is being created and pent up, until it can be liberated for the service of God and humanity. The meetings for worship are simply glorious'.⁵² His Quaker background in silent meditation undoubtedly contributed to this positive experience.

He was not alone in this experience. For example, one FOR member wrote: 'Thanks to His guidance and presence, my days in prison and guardroom cell have been ones of joy. I have converted prison into a monastery, a home whereby I can meditate upon Him'.⁵³ This kind of experience indicated the peace of mind FOR leaders were interested in generating. They did not ask a member to be an absolutist or an alternativist, 'not [for] this specific form of witness or that, but [for] each man's absolute fidelity to the Will of Christ as he conceives it'. Such a mentality ruled out NCF obstructive methods, which were, according to a letter FOR general secretary Richard Roberts wrote to Fenner Brockway, the NCF honorary secretary, 'a practical denial of the democratic principle'.⁵⁴ In general, FOR members were willing to work and, if necessary, to suffer. These different perspectives could cause serious friction between FOR and non-FOR COs, as was the case in the Denton Camp.⁵⁵ In what may have been a reference to the Home Office scheme, offered to those who had served time, Ed Beck wrote to his mentor C.J. Cadoux, a later FOR chairman, that he worked with three other COs, but regarded them as slackers and a trouble to the foreman.⁵⁶

The friction was essentially the result of different worldviews. According to Stanley B. James, who on 30 April 1917 exchanged his position at the militantly anti-government NCF office for one at the FOR:

The difference of atmosphere made itself felt at once. Coming into the company of these quiet-minded folk out of the feverish passions of a war-mad world, and to sense their consciousness of moral responsibility after the reckless adventuresomeness of the body I had just left was like coming into port after a storm at sea. The lofty idealism of these uplifters was a tonic antidote to the grossness let loose by war conditions.⁵⁷

This should not be taken to mean that FOR members were quietists in the pietistic sense, as could be implied in Ceadel's terminology. They were not adverse to political involvement. Indeed, many ran for political office. But they eschewed the obstructionist, confrontational and adversarial approach, since it was not commensurate with their view of Jesus' lifestyle.

No further excerpts of Sparkes' letters were published and hence it is impossible to tell if he continued to hold such a lofty view of his prison experiences. At least he had not changed his idealistic views when he appeared at his second court-martial, held again at Portsmouth, shortly after mid-May when he was listed to be at Fort Purbrooke awaiting trial. He apparently was charged with wilful obstruction in declining to obey military orders. He rejected the charge as 'utterly repugnant' to him because it implied negativism, something at variance with his principles. Yet, in a roundabout way he admitted that he had not obeyed the orders: 'I have never enlisted and cannot become a soldier without surrendering my highest convictions'. In the rest of his defence he used the same arguments and frequently the same words as before. He remained in prison, this time in Wandsworth Civil Prison. His name, with those of other Friends and Attenders detained by the military or in prison, appeared quarterly in *The Friend*. After the war these men were called 'prisoners of hope'.⁵⁸

In the meantime Margaret Hobhouse recruited influential support for the release of her son Stephen. Lord Milner, one of her recruits, included Sparkes in his 24 August 1917 memorandum to the cabinet suggesting release.⁵⁹ In the Fall of 1917 Hobhouse's year-long campaign had a modicum of success: about three hundred absolutists, including her son, were discharged, dependent upon a five-year disenfranchisement after the war. But her campaign had no effect on Sparkes, nor did the armistice bring about immediate release. In fact, the still nearly 1500 imprisoned conscientious objectors were generally not released until about half a year later, although those doing work of national importance were being released early in 1919. Although imprisoned, Sparkes was treated as an alternativist. John Hilton of the Garton Foundation suggested to him that he write to the Central Tribunal to reopen his case. This he did on 7 January 1919. He was sent a questionnaire, which he filled in, but he refused to accept the accompanying conditions since they compromised his principles. Even so, the Central Tribunal recommended his release for work of national importance to the Home Office Committee. This Committee asked him whether he was willing to work under civilian control in accordance with the Exceptional Employment Scheme. Sparkes objected because he understood release as placing him 'outside the Military Service Act and any Committee set up thereunder'. The result was that he was not recommended. On 7 February Sparkes wrote again, now only giving a simple 'yes' to the official question: 'Is the prisoner willing to do work of National Importance under civilian control?' On 11 February he was taken before the Governor, Chief Clerk and Chief Warder of Wandsworth prison and told of his release. He in turn asked them to be witnesses of the fact that he 'absolutely refused to accept any conditions'. Without further ado he was released. In a letter to *The Friend* he indicated why he had acted in apparently such a stubborn manner: 'I hope we have established a useful precedent'.⁶⁰

Certainly, the precedent he and others set during World War I benefited COs during World War II. But Sparkes could not foresee that. In fact, he did not live to see it for he died on 6 April 1933, a little more than 51 years old. Perhaps his prison experience had worn him out after all. While his involvement in guild socialism has received some scholarly attention, his lengthy attempt to obtain exemption has until now been ignored. It is difficult to determine if the Somme offensive, grinding to an end, had any influence on the tribunal decisions. Certainly the military representatives exercised great influence and, as Sparkes' case makes clear, could be unwilling to accept conscientious objection even though the local tribunal accepted it. That not every time all the submitted material was consulted, especially during the appeals, suggests that full justice was not done and that the spirit of the exemption was flaunted. Sparkes' case shows that the system was not working as smoothly as Rae's legal and somewhat abstract approach tends to suggest; in fact, the system could victimise even those willing to do alternative work. Counted as an absolutist, Sparkes was in reality an alternativist who was forced to take an absolutist position. His ideological stand indicates that it is inadequate to view COs solely through the lens of the NCF. Even viewing him through the prism of the FSC would not do him full justice. Sparkes should be regarded as a representative, Quaker or otherwise, of many FOR members who held a different perspective from these two organisations.

Even Sparkes' theoretical work on post-war industrial reconciliation, encouraged by the government while he was in prison, turned out to be difficult to implement. His building parliaments scheme attained some success, but internal dissension, government regulations and economic problems brought about the collapse of the scheme.⁶¹ Although he did not succeed in the way he hoped, his story gives a glimpse into a new type of pacifism: stubborn yet non-confrontational, actively seeking reconciliation in all spheres of life, bridging and transforming the energetic nonconformist conscience of the late nineteenth century into a new British reformism with a post-millennial foundation.⁶² He exemplified what Richard Roberts proclaimed at Llandudno and Cambridge and what the FOR modelled during the first years of its existence: a faith in action.⁶³

NOTES

1. The last militia ballot was held in 1831, but did not result in military service for those chosen. By that time the army in Britain had declined to about 51,000 men, who until 1847 enlisted for life. With the French invasion scare of 1852 the government proposed a militia act that turned out to be an act of futility. For the context, see Barnett, C., *Britain and Her Army 1509-1970: A Military, Political and Social Survey*, London: Allen Lane/Penguin Press, 1970, Part 3; Ceadel, M., *The Origins of War Prevention: The British Peace Movement and International Relations, 1730-1854*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, p. 482.

2. Pakenham, T., *The Boer War*, New York: Random House, 1979. For the conscription controversy, see Adams, R.J.Q., and Poirier, P.P., *The Conscription Controversy in Great Britain, 1900-18*, Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 1987; Barnett, *Britain and Her Army*, Chapters 15-16; Boulton, D., *Objection Overruled*, London: Macgibbon & Kee, 1967; Chamberlain, W.J., *Fighting for Peace*, London: N.M.W.M., 1929 (repr. New York: Garland Press, 1971); Graham, J.W., *Conscription and Conscience: A History 1916-1919*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1922; Hayes,

D., *Conscription Conflict*, London: Sheppard Press, 1949 (repr. New York: Garland Press, 1973); Rae, J., *Conscience and Politics*, London: Oxford University Press, 1970.

3. Draft Bill 297-98, 2 (I); Rae, *Conscience and Politics*, p. 31.

4. For the NCF, see Kennedy, T.C., *The Hound of Conscience: A History of the No-Conscription Fellowship 1914-1919*, Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1981; Vellacott, J., *Bertrand Russell and the Pacifists in the First World War*, Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980.

5. For Sparkes, see Bellamy, J.M., and Saville, J., *Dictionary of Labour Biography*, II, London: Macmillan, 1972, pp. 350-54; Sparkes' obituary in *The Friend* 91, 16 (21 April 1933), pp. 323-24 (it gives the wrong year of birth), *Bucks Advertiser and Gazette*, 14 April 1933, and *Dictionary of Quaker Biography*. His wife's unpublished biography cannot be located at the Library of the Society of Friends (LSF) at Friends House; for microfiche material, see Hull University, M/I 794, A Collection of Publications, Letters and Cuttings re. Malcolm Sparkes and Guild Socialism. See also Kennedy, T.C., *British Quakerism 1860-1920: The Transformation of a Religious Community*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, for a general background to the Religious Society of Friends.

6. For the labour unrest, see Dangerfield, G., *The Strange Death of Liberal England 1910-1914*, New York: H. Smith & R. Haas, 1935, especially Part 2 Chapter 4; Pelling, H., *Popular Politics and Society in Late Victorian Britain*, London: Macmillan, 1968, Chapter 9; Postgate, R.W., *The Builders' History*, London: The Labour Publishing Co., 1923.

7. For the development of his labour-management relations ideas, see den Boggende, B., 'Pacifism and British Labor Relations: Malcolm Sparkes's Industrial Parliament Scheme', *Fides et Historia* 33, 1 (2001), pp. 89-108. Usually classified as guild socialism, Sparkes' approach differed from, for example, G.D.H. Cole's guild socialism.

8. For the various types of pacifism, see Brock, P., *Pacifism in Europe to 1914*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972, pp. 472-76. Brock uses the term integrational pacifism, a late development in the history of pacifism. I prefer the term 'integrated pacifism', which is reflected in all of life. Before 1914 Quakers had not developed this whole-life-encompassing pacifism Sparkes looked for. For Quaker pacifism before the outbreak of World War I, see Brock, P., *The Quaker Peace Testimony 1660 to 1914*, York: Sessions Book Trust, 1990; Hirst, M.E., *The Quakers in War and Peace: An Account of their Peace Principles and Practice*, London: Swarthmore Press, 1923.

9. The SQS minutes are at LSF. See also Jones, P.d'A., *The Christian Socialist Revival 1877-1914*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968. For the SCM, begun in 1892 as the Student Volunteer Missionary Union, see Tatlow, T., *The Story of the Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland*, London: SCM Press, 1933; Rouse, R., *The World's Student Christian Federation*, London: SCM Press, 1948, esp. Chapter 12; Rouse, R., and Neill, S.C., (eds), *A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1577-1948*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954, Chapter 7. For the Swanwick Free Church Fellowship, see Norman, G.R.P., *Grace Unfailing: The Radical Mind and the Beloved Community of Richard Roberts*, Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1998, Chapter 11.

10. *The Friend* 54, 40 (2 October 1914), pp. 726-27; 41 (9 October 1914), pp. 738-39; 42 (16 October 1914), p. 757. For the speeches delivered at the Llandudno conference, see *Friends and the War*, London: Headley Brothers, 1914. According to John Graham (*Conscription and Conscience*, p. 155), 'at the beginning of the war the Society of Friends was the only body ready organized for action'. The discussions at the conference suggest otherwise. For the conference, see also Wood, H.G., *Henry T. Hodgkin: A Memoir*, London: SCM Press, 1937, p. 147, and Greenwood, J.O., *Quaker Encounters*. II. *Vines on the Mountains*, York: William Sessions, 1977, pp. 189-90.

11. For the FOR, see Brittain, V., *The Rebel Passion*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1964; Wallis, J., *Valiant for Peace: A History of the Fellowship of Reconciliation 1914-1989*, London: Fellowship of Reconciliation, 1991; and den Boggende, G.G.J., 'Fellowship of Reconciliation 1914-1945', PhD dissertation, McMaster University, Hamilton, 1986. For Roberts' Cambridge speech, see *The Friend* 55, 3 (15 January 1915), p. 46. For Sparkes' letter, see Henry T. Hodgkin archives at LSF, Temp. MSS 355, letter dated 27 December 1918. For his scheme, see den B. Boggende, 'Pacifism and British Relations'. The Quaker emphasis on the Inner Light is absent in FOR literature.

12. *News Sheet* (4 June 1915), n.p.; Hayes, *Conscription Conflict*, p. 277. See also 2 July 1915, p. 5. *News Sheet* was an FOR publication for its members. Heath was also a member of the NCF. The overlap of membership between the FOR and NCF has not been researched.

13. There was a division of labour in the Joint Advisory Committee, but the work for the FOR was limited. The FOR archives are held at the British Library of Political and Economic Science, London. For the FOR's tasks, see FOR 456; 5/3, 21 July 1916. For the letters sent, see *News Sheet* (15 February 1916 and 13 June 1916).

14. *News Sheet* (15 January 1916), p. 2; Hayes, *Conscription Conflict*, pp. 278–79. Friends Service Committee was strongly absolutist, even intolerant of those attempting to use political action or influence to mitigate punishment for COs; some of its members also seem to have been intolerant of Quakers who took alternative service. The FOR held to a quite different position. To some extent, the FOR could be regarded as an alternative organisation for those Quakers who differed from the FSC.

15. United Church Archives, Toronto, Richard Roberts Papers, file 58.

16. 5 & 6 Geo. 5. Ch. 104, Military Service Act, 25 May 1916.

17. The NCC was established on 10 March 1916. It also contained men who had objected to all military service. See Rae, *Conscience and Politics*, Chapter 9.

18. The FAU itself was a contentious issue among the Friends. Some, like Corder Catchpool, were willing to serve as volunteers but not under compulsion. For his experiences, see Catchpool's *On Two Fronts: Letters of a Conscientious Objector*, London: Headley Brothers, 1918. See also Boulton, *Objection Overruled*, pp. 53, 55–57.

19. Rae takes Asquith to task for the limited time available to draft the bill; however, as Adams and Poirier have noted, Lord Curzon had begun drafting the bill in September and with few changes that draft became law (*Conscription Controversy*, p. 131 n. 35).

20. Rae, *Conscience and Politics*, p. 94.

21. See Kennedy, *The Hound of Conscience*, pp. 83, 91.

22. Hobhouse, whose case has been well publicized, refused any compromise. His testimony shows little evidence of the FOR's integrated pacifism.

23. Uncharacteristically, *The Friend* did not give a precise date for Sparkes' appearance. While some records of local tribunals have survived, most were destroyed (Rae, *Conscience and Politics*, p. 259; see especially Chapter 6 for the tribunals at work). There was something like a division of labour between the Religious Society of Friends and the FOR. The former reported its members' appearances in *The Friend*, while the latter's *The Venturer* published their philosophical treatises. The quotes in this paragraph come from *The Friend* 56, 39 (29 September 1916), p. 761; see also *Pioneers of Good Will* (a pamphlet containing a page-long excerpt from Sparkes' presentation) published by the American Fellowship of Reconciliation, probably in 1918, Swarthmore College Peace Collection (SCPC): FOR; CDG-B.

24. SCPC and FOR London headquarters have many FOR pamphlets. For tolerance, see for instance Cadoux, C.J., 'The Implication of Mutual Tolerance', *The Venturer* 2, 4 (January 1917), p. 118; see also 1, 3 (December 1915), p. 66.

25. Compare *News Sheet* (25 August 1916), pp. 4–7.

26. Apparently he was involved in the British–American Peace Centenary Committee at Jordans, but did not elaborate his involvement. In 1914 London Yearly Meeting adopted the committee's recommendation for the extension of treaties of unlimited arbitration.

27. This decision may have been influenced by the fact that his second daughter was born in April 1915.

28. The letter to Stennett is printed in the Garton Foundation's *Industrial Council for the Building Industry*, London: Harrison's & Sons (1919–20), pp. 16–19.

29. Even the perceptive M. Ceadel (*Pacifism in Britain 1914–1945: The Defining of a Faith*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980) missed the connection. While in many ways the FOR and Quaker positions seem similar, what frequently distinguishes them is integrated pacifism. However, as the Llandudno conference makes clear, a segment of the Friends was moving towards an integrated

pacifism. SQS members, representing only a small segment of the Society, seem to have been in the forefront in moving towards an integrated pacifism and so was Henry Hodgkin. At that time integrated pacifism had as yet not been achieved. Sparkes is usually looked upon as an absolutist, a nomenclature that does not do him justice. I suspect that this nomenclature for some other COs, including some of the 145 Quaker COs, needs to be revised.

30. For Harvey's speech, see *The Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), Fifth Series, 86, 10 October–2 November, 1916, cols. 1249–52. After the war Sparkes wrote: 'The principle upon which the Building Trade Parliament is built is the very principle that the tribunals failed to understand and for which they sent thousands of men to prison' ('Principles in Action', *News Sheet* 4, 5 [20 April 1920], p. 2).

31. *The Friend* (29 September 1916), p. 761.

32. Angell, N., *After All: The Autobiography of Norman Angell*, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1951, p. 164. See also 'War and Peace', in Bell, J., (ed.), *We Did Not Fight: 1914–18 Experiences of War Resisters*, London: Cobden-Sanders, 1935, Chapter 2; Marrin, A., *Sir Norman Angell*, Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979; Miller, J.D.B., *Norman Angell and the Futility of War: Peace and the Public Mind*, York: St Martin's Press, 1986; Nixon, E., *John Hilton: The Story of his Life*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1946, Chapters 6 and 7. In *The Great Illusion*, London: William Heinemann, 1910 (repr. New York: Garland, 1972), Angell had argued that force was futile as a means of imposing ideas and institutions; that war was irrational, a mistake, and not inevitable; and that no nation could profit economically from international war. Conquest was an illusion and therefore co-operation should replace and actually was replacing force in international relations.

33. It is not clear if this was the occasion for his resignation from his company or if he had already resigned. According to *The Friend* (29 September 1916), the *Memorandum* had already been published, but this is incorrect. It was privately circulated between May and September, amended and published in October 1916, revised and enlarged in January 1919.

34. *The Friend* (29 September 1916), p. 761.

35. *The Friend* (29 September 1916), p. 761.

36. Quoted in *The Friend* (29 September 1916), p. 761, taken from the *Manchester Guardian*.

37. Graham, *Conscription and Conscience*, p. 65.

38. *The Friend* (10 November 1916), pp. 886–87.

39. While Rae mentions the Central Tribunal decision of 5 June, he does not fully explain how the limited authority of the Pelham Committee came about (*Conscience and Politics*, pp. 125–26). For Fisher's remarks, see *The Manchester Guardian* (26 October 1916), p. 4.

40. *The Friend* (10 November 1916), pp. 886–87.

41. *The Friend* does not go into detail about his scheme. His defence was an interesting rehearsal for a speech he gave on Saturday 21 October at a Friends' conference on 'War Spirit and the Social Order' at Devonshire House, London. *The Friend* (27 October 1916), p. 844.

42. The reference is probably to John Hilton, although he was officially acting secretary.

43. *Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), Fifth series, 86, 10 October–2 November, 1916, cols. 1249–52 and 1262–66, which includes Fisher's reply.

44. *The Friend* (15 December 1916), p. 983. It stated that he appeared for the local tribunal for the fifth time, but confused that with the total number of times he appeared before tribunals.

45. Graham, *Conscription and Conscience*, Chapter 3; Boulton, *Objection Overruled*, p. 134.

46. *The Friend* (15 December 1916), p. 983.

47. For the work of the Sub-Committee, see Stitt, J.W., 'Whitley Councils: Their Conception and Adoption During W.W.I.', PhD dissertation, University of Southern Carolina, 1976. For Sparkes article, see *The Venturer* 2, 3 (December 1916), pp. 76–80. In 1917 the Lloyd George government created a Ministry of Reconstruction, which, among other things, looked into the various phases of industrial life.

48. See the minutes of the FOR Social Services Committee, FOR 456; 5/7; 11 December 1916, and Garton Foundation, *The Industrial Council for the Building Industry*, p. 44. He apparently walked about six miles in his cell and about nine miles during his two hours exercise outdoors.

49. *The Friend* 91,16 (21 April 1933), p. 324; it is possible that 1917 is a typographical error.
50. It is not clear who advised him; it may have been an officer at the court martial.
51. Foucault, M., *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison*, New York: Vintage Books, 1979 (French edn 1975); Lewis, G.K., *Elizabeth Fry*, London: Headley Brothers, 1909; Ignatieff, M., *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750–1850*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1978; Rose, J., *Elizabeth Fry*, London: Macmillan, 1980.
52. *The Friend* 91,16 (21 April 1933), pp. 324; 57, 20 (18 May 1917), p. 382; see also *Pioneers of Good Will*, p. 4. He may have borrowed some of his terminology from P.B. (Percy Bartlett?).
53. *News Sheet* (25 December 1916), p. 5; cf. 25 October 1916, p. 3; 1 May 1917, p. 10. See also Graham, *Conscription and Conscience*, p. 90.
54. United Church Archives, Richard Roberts archive, file 39, 19 September 1916.
55. FOR 456; 5/3; 19 June 1917.
56. For the Home Office scheme, see Rae, *Conscience and Politics*, Chapter 8; Graham, *Conscription and Conscience*, Chapter 7; Kennedy, *The Hound of Conscience*, Chapter 8. Many NCF members rejected the scheme. Beck's complaint was not unique; many COs who accepted the scheme complained about it; see Ed Beck to C.J. Cadoux, letter dated 25 April 1917. Cadoux' archives are in the Bodleian Library, Oxford: Box 9. See also FOR 456; 5/3; letter of 10 January 1917 to Bertrand Russell, then acting NCF chairman.
57. James, S.B., *The Adventures of a Spiritual Tramp*, London: Longmans, 1925, p. 106.
58. *The Friend* 57, 23 (8 June 1917), p. 465; 24 (15 June 1917), p. 480.
59. CAB 24/24/1833. He referred to Sparkes' industrial relations work. See Rae, *Conscience and Politics*, p. 210 n. 2; for the release and the politics, see pp. 208–25.
60. *The Friend* 59, 9 (28 February 1919), p. 128. According to Graham, Sparkes was released early 'because the King happened to ask who was the author of the Whitley Councils scheme' (*Conscription and Conscience*, p. 243). Sparkes himself compared the Whitley Councils to a ship without an engine.
61. Historians of guild socialism have rarely explained the role of Sparkes. Yet as S.T. Glass wrote, 'the influence of guild ideas on the building workers had much to do with the work of Malcolm Sparkes, a London company director' (*The Responsible Society*, London: Longmans, 1966, p. 54). See also Carpenter, L.P., *G.D.H. Cole*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973, p. 101, and Carpenter, N., *Guild Socialism*, New York: D. Appleton, 1922, pp. 118–19. For the troubles Sparkes encountered, see Den Boggende, 'Pacifism and Labor Relations', pp. 101–06.
62. For the influence of nineteenth century Nonconformity, see Bebbington, D.W., *The Nonconformist Conscience*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982.
63. The FOR did not maintain its all-encompassing world-and-life view Roberts propounded. During the 1920s much of it disappeared.

AUTHOR DETAILS

The author emigrated from the Netherlands to Canada in 1967. He obtained graduate degrees in Art History, Christian Studies and History and completed his PhD in 1986, at McMaster University, Hamilton, on 'The Fellowship of Reconciliation, 1914–1945'. He has published articles about Luther and art, marriage rites, nineteenth century Methodist female education in Ontario, twentieth century Christian school education in Hamilton, and Harriet Martineau.

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