

Tukufu Zuberi: Our first story opens a window on a little-known chapter of the Second World War, when some Americans marched to the beat of a different drummer. American history has been fundamentally shaped by force of arms. Since the revolution, some 42 million Americans have served in the military in dozens of conflicts around the globe. Perhaps no war has won more popular support than the crusade which followed Pearl Harbor, a great national struggle to defeat fascism in Asia and Europe. For almost four years, America marched with an unprecedented singleness of purpose, making home-front sacrifices, building an armada of ships and planes, and sending its young men off to war. But just how uniform was this support for World War II? A collector from Aiken, South Carolina, has two documents which he bought on the Internet. These may be evidence that the war presented some Americans with an agonizing choice: Love of god or love of country.

David Watts: Since I was a kid, I was always pretty much fascinated by World War II. I was on one of the sites one day and I saw these documents. Every time I'd look at it, it would just kind of make me curious. What is this all about? And it just fascinated me.

Tukufu: I'm Tukufu Zuberi. As a sociologist with a special interest in popular dissent, I'm curious to meet Dave Watts and see what he's found.

David: How are you doing?

Tukufu: "This certifies that Raymond Ullery has contributed the within-stated sum to the Church of the Brethren to be used in civilian public service." Wow. So, what do you make of these, David?

David: Well, I really don't know. I know that further on it states that "This contribution is intended as an alternate service to war, in which my conscience does not permit me to engage." I get the feeling that these are some type of certificates that by paying a certain sum of money would get you out of military service.

Tukufu: Okay, but the certificates are only for \$5 each. Together that's only \$10. That would have been cheap.

David: And this is 1943, which would make it World War II.

Tukufu: Do you know who Raymond Ullery is?

David: No, I have no idea who he is.

Tukufu: What do you want to know?

David: Well, I want to know what these documents are. Is this some type of document that, by paying a sum of money you were exempt from military service? If not, what were they for?

Tukufu: I must say that I have never seen certificates like this. I'm going to take these and go see what I can find out and bring you back an answer.

David: Sounds good. Thank you.

Tukufu: Dave is almost certainly wrong about the certificates. You weren't permitted to buy your way out of military service in World War II. That was something the U.S. put an end to after the Civil War, when the wealthy often paid money to avoid the draft. But the text does clearly state that the contribution is intended as an alternate service to war, and these terms, "Civilian Public Service" and "Brethren Service Committee" suggest some kind of well-organized operation. Up here in the right-hand corner is a registration number, and down here we have the General Financial Secretary's signature. And on the back, "Building with Christ," Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. "But whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." This is Jesus' well-known plea for pacifism and non-violence. I'm pretty sure the certificates have something to do with religious conscientious objectors during World War II, but I'm not sure how. J.E. McNeil is executive director of the Center on Conscience and War. She tells me that the history of conscientious objectors in the U.S. began when members of the so-called peace churches left Europe in the 17th

century to avoid military conscription. And which churches were the peace churches?

J.E. McNeil: Well, they're generally considered to be the Quakers, the Mennonites, and the Church of the Brethren.

Tukufu: Church of the Brethren. They're on the certificate that I'm investigating.

J.E.: Well, that makes a lot of sense because they're pretty big players in the conscientious objection history.

Tukufu: J.E. tells me that during the Civil War, America first acknowledged its citizens had a moral right not to bear arms. Instead, they could serve in military hospitals or other military non-combatant roles. The issue flared again during World War I when some conscientious objectors opposed any requirement they serve in the armed forces, whether in combat or not. Those men were forcibly inducted and sentenced to military prison, where some fared worse than they might have in battle. One guy in particular refused to wear the military uniform, so they let him stand out in the Kansas winters naked until he caught pneumonia and died. That's some pretty harsh treatment. The story of Joseph Hofer and his death from pneumonia became public and drew criticism in newspapers. On December 16, 1918, the Secretary of War, Newton Baker, issued an order prohibiting the brutal punishment of military prisoners. J.E. tells me that in 1940, as the German army occupied Paris, F.D.R. was forced to plan for conscription. With war clouds gathering for Americans, the leaders of the peace churches didn't want conscientious objectors to suffer as they had in World War I so they created a program, Civilian Public Service, C.P.S., which was alternative service which allowed them to do work of national importance, work that was helpful to the country but didn't involve killing other people. Okay, you know, this term, Civilian Public Service, I have these certificates, and as you can see, it says "Civilian Public Service." Have you ever seen a certificate like this?

J.E.: No, no, I never have.

Tukufu: Although J.E. hadn't seen the documents, she was very familiar with the wartime Civilian Public Service program. It allowed conscientious objectors to serve the country in other ways: fighting forest fires, building roads, or working on community health projects. It was based on the C.C.C. Camps—the Civilian Conservation Corps Camps—from the depression era. It's fascinating history. But I still don't understand what one of these certificates bought you, or how the Church of the Brethren was linked to the program. I've e-mailed the Church of the Brethren's national office in Elgin, Illinois. Archivist Ken Shaffer responded with some news. The Church of the Brethren contributed \$1.3 million to support the C.P.S. Program. Well, that was a lot of money in 1943. It seems that the peace churches knew Franklin Roosevelt had little sympathy for conscientious objectors so they decided to fund a program themselves. Raising money became a grassroots effort. These wooden cups were used for coin donations. Collecting stamps was another way to support C.P.S. and listen to this, one of the ways of recognizing individuals who donated money for C.P.S. was by issuing certificates. Here's one for \$50, and another one for \$10 and they look exactly like ours. Okay, so now I know what these certificates were, but who bought them? And who was Raymond Ullery? The Brethren Office sent me a directory of all the men who refused to join the military and opted instead for the C.P.S. Program. There's no Raymond Ullery listed. He's probably one of the brethren members who donated money to support the program. But there's something strange about the directory: it's a pretty small book. Brethren registered for military service, and only 1,386 opted for Civilian Public Service. That's only 6%, so 94% of the Brethren opted to serve in the military. That's not what I expected from a church that encouraged its members to resist war. David Eller is a professor of religion and history at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania, a brethren-run school. Here's what I don't understand, David. Why did so few of these guys follow their faith? Wasn't the church's official position alternative service?

David Eller: Yes, it was alternative service, but to fully understand that, you have to see that the Brethren were in a period of great cultural transformation.

Tukufu: David tells me that the church of the brethren members first settled in America in 1723, setting themselves apart from what they saw as a sinful world. But by the time our certificates were issued, most Brethren were part of the American mainstream, and so the boys who, at 18 and 19 when drafted, went off to war believed that they were in a war to preserve freedom. So World War II was considered a different kind of war.

David: It was a different kind of war. If there was ever a war in American history that meets the test or the qualification

for a just war in at least most Christians' mind, it would be World War II. There's a clear evil that has to be stopped. Yet, many of them supported the idea of C.P.S. I mean, the Brethren raised \$1.3 million!

Tukufu: Was this a kind of guilt-giving?

David: I -- personally guilt is a strong word. I would say the church as a whole was conflicted. There were congregations who totally supported C.P.S., 100% behind their young men. There were other congregations who were proud of their number of servicemen.

Tukufu: This must have been a very divisive moment for the church.

David: It was very divisive. If you really want to understand that, the best thing to do might be to talk to somebody who actually went through C.P.S.

Tukufu: David recommended I speak with 85-year-old Harry Graybill. He was baptized into the Church of the Brethren as a young child and became an avid student of the Bible.

Harry Graybill: I took that experience rather seriously, and I've read the Bible, especially the New Testament, and it was the teachings of Jesus that were my influence.

Tukufu: Despite the attack on Pearl Harbor, Harry says he couldn't defend America with arms. He realized how unpopular his decision was when traveling by rail to his first C.P.S. posting in 1942. They discovered that we were C.O.S., we were not going into the armed forces, and so one day, on our return from the dining car, the people in the club car stood up and sang "the Star-Spangled Banner." We just stood there until they were finished and then moved on. After fighting forest fires in California and working as a cook, Harry was posted to a state mental hospital in Maryland.

Harry: They were looking for volunteers to staff the tuberculosis sick ward. It was hellish work. Most men didn't want to go there because you had a good chance of contracting tuberculosis. And I wasn't married, I didn't even have a girlfriend, I had no excuse not to go. So I thought, yeah, I'll volunteer to go there. So I did, and I spent one year approximately on that ward.

Tukufu: Weren't you afraid of getting sick?

Harry: About five years or more after C.P.S., I did come down with tuberculosis and spent six months in a sanitarium.

Tukufu: Wow. I showed Harry our certificates. Did most of the young men in his congregation follow his example?

Harry: Definitely not. I think there was something like 80 men were drafted, and four of us eventually went to C.P.S. I was very disappointed in the beginning that people -- men did not take the C.O. position because I really expected that a lot would, although I guess I have more understanding now than I did then.

Tukufu: Harry then told me a story that I think will help Dave understand the meaning of his certificates.

How are you doing? Come on in. I tell Dave the documents had nothing to do with buying a way out of World War II, but had been used by the brethren to support conscientious objectors.

Dave: I just never thought of that.

Tukufu: I met a guy named Harry Graybill, and he was really able to point out the significance of these certificates to me, in a very profound way. Seeing Dave's certificates took Harry back 50 years, to one of the most painful times in his life.

Harry: Two of my best friends did go into the armed forces, and that -- for one of those it was quite a shock for me because I really expected that he would take the C.O. position. One was killed in the Battle of the Bulge in Europe, and the other was killed in Italy.

Tukufu: Harry is at peace with his decision, but for a long time afterwards, one of the men who volunteered to fight would return and haunt his sleep.

Harry: I did have dreams about the one friend that for some time, maybe even years later, that dream that he really was not killed, that he was still living. So it had a tremendous impact on me.

Tukufu: I tell Dave his certificates are from a little-known chapter of history, when a small army of Americans refused to go to war. Although Harry Graybill wouldn't pick up a gun to fight fascism, Dave says he's every inch a hero.

Dave: It takes a lot of courage to stand up and express your convictions, especially in an era of World War II, and I think that is a very honorable thing for somebody to do. And these are going to have a special place in my collection because they stand for something that a person was proud to do and was not afraid to do, and to go against the grain, so to speak.

Harry: I began making a list, reasons to go into the armed forces and reasons not to. The reasons to go into the armed forces were money, respect, opportunity to go to college, and so on. And the other list said, well, I can't kill anybody, and that was just about it.

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