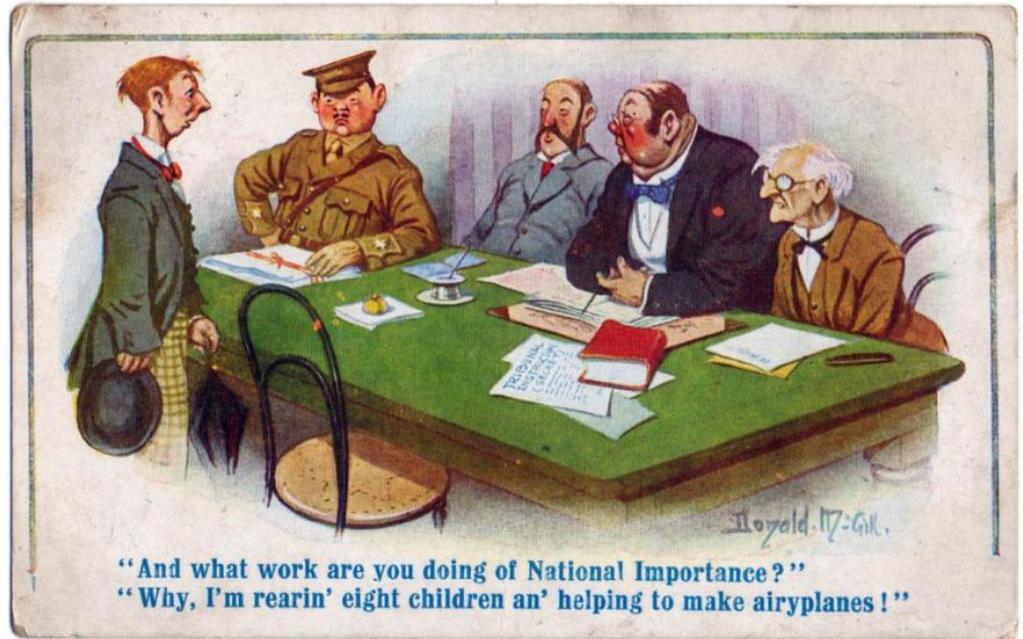


BACKGROUND

In this scene Harry Payne, a shoe repairer from Balsall Heath is called before a Military Tribunal to justify his intention not to enlist.

Payne's pacifist beliefs are challenged by the Officer, who threatens him with prison if he does not change his mind. Payne did not and was duly incarcerated until January 1919.



OFFICER: Mr Payne isn't it.

PAYNE: Yes Sir. Harry Payne. With a Y

OFFICER: Now I understand you have some views Mr Payne. In fact I believe you are refusing to fight for your country in its hour of need. Is that so?

PAYNE: When all this, the war I mean, when it started - I supported the aims of going to war with Germany I really did.

OFFICER: So you support the war but you want other men to fight the good fight, not you? I'm sure that will make them all feel better, knowing you're sitting safe and sound supporting them while they face danger and death.

PAYNE: May I explain? One day I happened to see bayonet practice taking place in the park and it turned my stomach. I'm a Christian you see Sir and it goes against my beliefs. It cannot be Christian to do that even to a German. I went home and talked it over with my wife, and decided that whatever the consequences I would never enlist. I wish to claim exemption on grounds of my conscience.

OFFICER: I can assure you Mr Payne, that our British army is full of Christians who see that fighting this enemy is God's wish. You can rest assured that God is our side.

PAYNE: I am simply not willing to kill people. I am sure that killing cannot be God's wish.

OFFICER: Well if you must be so flabby. We have vacancies arising regularly - for obvious reasons - for a stretcher bearer, or in an ambulance, or as a cook. That would be doing your bit rather than skiving

PAYNE: To me it's no different

OFFICER: You'll go to prison if you refuse to serve at all, you know that? I ask you Is it worth it?

PAYNE: It's not a question of whether it's worth it or not. It's my conscience. I have to live with that. My duty is to God...

OFFICER: Mr Payne, we have made a reasonable offer to appease your sad little conscience and you have refused. Next it will be a full Tribunal & I would urge you to consider carefully how you respond. Go on, go now before I say something I regret.