

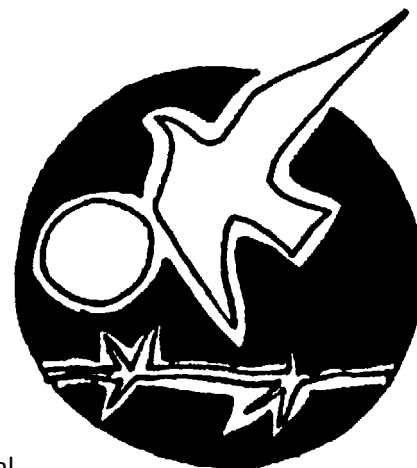


# The Goshen Conference

Goshen Conference, a special Annual Meeting convened on January 9, 1918, at Goshen, Indiana, to deal with the problems faced by Brethren conscientious objectors to military service during World War I.

**We believe that war or any participation in war is wrong and entirely incompatible with the spirit, example, and teachings of Jesus Christ.**

Attended solely by delegates, the conference approved both a resolution that was sent to the US president and other government officials and the "Goshen Statement," an expression of the traditional Brethren position on peace and military service that was intended to give official denominational support and encouragement to Brethren conscientious objectors who faced conscription. Delegates also appointed a Central Service Committee to deal with peace concerns and a Committee for Relief and Reconstruction.



On July 8, 1918, the officers of the Goshen Conference and the authors of the "Goshen Statement" were threatened with prosecution for sedition. After meeting with Frederick P. Keppel, an assistant to Secretary of War

Newton W. Baker, and after prayerful consideration, members of the Central Service Committee agreed to withdraw the "Goshen Statement" from circulation and affirmed their loyalty to the US government. The threatened prosecution was dropped.

The administration of President Woodrow Wilson wanted to eliminate opposition to its policies on war and military conscription. Church of the Brethren leaders feared both the power of a War Department armed with the Espionage Act (1917) and the stigma of being labeled un-American. Political expediency confronting religious ideals led to a compromise for Brethren in troubled times.

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