

CONSCIENCE CANADA



“Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms: freedom of conscience and religion...”
2a Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Constitution Act, 1981

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Welcome to Newsletter #87!

Editorial: Jan Slakov, Secretary of Conscience Canada

*“Since wars begin in the minds of men,
it is in the minds of men that
the defences of peace must be constructed.”*
- UNESCO Constitution, 1945

As this newsletter will show, much of our Conscience Canada work is focused on constructing the “defences of peace”, beginning with what is in our minds. We can consciously choose to see the world in ways that lead us to build peace, rather than look for enemies.

Meanwhile, an amazing amount of energy goes into seeing war as inevitable, glorious and honourable. For example, the federal government is constructing a Canadian War Museum at an initial cost of \$136 million. A Committee for an Expanded Mandate for the Canadian War Museum

(mothom@cyberus.ca) is collecting “signatures” of groups (including CC) and individuals who want the museum to include displays on the role Canadians have played and continue to play in war prevention and the peaceful resolution of violent conflicts.

Of course, we want to go far beyond the mandate of the war museum (Remember, Preserve & Educate). Our report on the Conscience Canada Dialogues (pp. 3-5) will, we hope, be a useful tool on our efforts to build a culture of peace and nonviolence. Peace with justice is not only desirable; it is a necessary goal which we can help achieve. We are grateful to be part of a group animated by this vision.

P.S. Sorry about the delay getting this newsletter out to you! ☺

In Memoriam

**Edith Adamson, founder of the Peace Tax Fund Committee/Conscience Canada
1913 – 2004**



This newsletter bears the sad news of Edith Adamson’s passing. Mixed with the sadness is also much gratitude for her strength of spirit and the energy and commitment she devoted to a cause we hold dear. Edith’s friend and a past president of Conscience Canada, Milnor Alexander,

provided us with a copy of a family memorial statement, which gives a wonderful indication of the richness of Edith’s life. We would like to share the Quaker quote it cites as speaking Edith’s truth: “Walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone.” ☺

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Report on Conscience Canada Activities

Bruna Nota, President of Conscience Canada

2004 Annual General Meeting

The 2004 AGM of Conscience Canada (CC) was held on 21st April at the Danforth Mennonite Church in Toronto. Twenty-three members were in attendance in person or by proxy. In addition to dealing with internal organizational issues resulting from the move from Victoria to Toronto and an audit of the financial records, work over the last year has included participation in anti-war demonstrations, support of the Coalition Against the Arms Trade petition protesting the CPP investments in arms manufacture, expansion of CC's internet presence, publication of two issues of the CC newsletter, and the organization across the country of over a dozen public meetings of COMTs (conscientious objectors to military taxation) and sympathizers (see pp. 3-5).

Additionally, once again in 2003 Svend Robinson presented the Peace Tax Petition to the House of Commons calling on Parliament to enact the Peace Tax legislation known as the Conscientious Objection Act. The petition gave rise to important correspondence with the Finance Minister, which is posted at <http://www.consciencecanada.ca>

Plans for the future are to have CC and NIPP (Nos impôts pour la paix) well represented at the Tenth International Conference on War Tax Resistance and Peace Tax Campaign biennial meeting in Brussels (see p. 6) and to organize a strong lobby on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, towards the enactment of the *Conscientious Objection Act*, in the winter of 2004-2005 (see next column).

Dominique Boisvert, Marilyn Hébert, Joshua Mira Goldberg, Brunna Nota, Jan Slakov, and Don Woodside were elected to the Board of Directors for the upcoming year. The Board was authorized to appoint the Treasurer, as the position is presently vacant. We thank past board members, staff and volunteers, with particular recognition of Heather Sturrock for her service on the Board.

Financial Report

Conscience Canada's financial situation is not bad thanks to the generous donations received during the year from the Franz Blumenfeld Peace Fund (\$700), the Canadian Friends Services Committee (\$500), the Mennonite Central Committee – Eastern Canada (\$491), and numerous members. The fact that we are operating completely on a volunteer basis is crucial. As we plan a major lobby campaign

in the winter of 2005 we will need to reconsider our ability to operate without at least some staff.

CC manages two accounts. The deposits in the *Peace Trust account* (\$20,467 at the end of 2003) belong to the depositors, currently 40 COMTs. The *operating account* holds the funds provided by individual membership as well as individual and organizational group donations, and is used for expenses associated with publishing newsletters, education and advocacy campaigns, special projects, and participation in conferences. Even without staff or rent, the 2004 operating budget comes to \$9,000; we anticipate higher expenditures in 2005 relating to the lobby campaign.

Ottawa Lobby 2005

The major activity we are planning for 2005 is a one-week lobby campaign to Parliament during the winter or spring sitting of the House. Once the Parliamentary calendar is set we will inform you of the dates, hopefully in the next newsletter.

Our two previous lobby campaigns in 1995 and 1998 increased parliamentarians' and civil servants' awareness of Conscientious Objectors' issues and advanced our cause. We look forward to face-to-face meetings with MPs and other officials and to following up on those meetings to help us achieve our goal of legal means for exercising our right to freedom of conscience. Conscience Canada members, Peace Churches, friends and sympathisers can support these efforts by contacting their MPs, financial donations, etc.

We plan to hold our Annual General Meeting and a public meeting in Ottawa in connection with the lobby campaign. As of mid July we had over 500 signatures on the CC petition to Parliament. Please see if you can elicit more from your friends and acquaintances. We would like to make an official and public presentation of these petitions, ideally to a group of parliamentarians from all parties for them to take jointly to the House. You can get a copy of the petition (English/French) from the CC office or download it from <http://www.consciencecanada.ca>

This trip to Ottawa will also be the first time when the Board will meet face to face. For over two years we have done all our work electronically and while we think we have been very successful, we feel the need for deeper exchanges to take Conscience Canada to the next level of effectiveness. ☺

SUMMARY: Non-violent Alternatives to Canadian Defence and Security – Conscience Canada Dialogues, April 2004

"We demand our governments renounce violence and war.

Instead prepare for peace through justice for all citizens of the world."

- final statement of the 4th World Social Forum held in Mumbai, India, 16-21 January 2004

Introduction

In spring 2004, Conscience Canada invited its members to meet to discuss questions about Canadian defence and security. Fifteen communities from Moncton to Victoria responded; close to 250 people participated in the dialogue, thanks to the good work of all the organizers.

The CC Board undertook this initiative because we believe that there is no 'just war'. In addition to our refusal to pay for military expenditures, we must help determine future directions of Canada's foreign affairs and defence policies which will provide a non-violent, humane and effective means for settling conflicts. We believe that we must move from the position that peace is desirable to the position that peace is necessary and possible, and we must find out how.

The discussion questions were:

- 1) What kind of defence/security strategy makes the most sense for Canada?
- 2) What situations (e.g. national emergencies, aggression, peacekeeping) and what needs (e.g. food, energy, education, economy) should be taken into consideration when pondering non-violent defence strategies?
- 3) What mandate should Canadian defence forces have, and how would they be trained/equipped?
- 4) Can we identify some initial steps we could work towards, individually and organisationally?

The Process

Groups submitted written reports of their discussions. The following points are representative of the reports, but we have not attempted to come to consensus among the membership on all these points. Because the individual questions led to overlapping responses, the results are not reported question by question, but using another framework, as identified below.

This report will form the basis for our brief to the government on defence policy, and a firm basis for our lobbying efforts for conscientious objector legislation which we plan to undertake in winter/early spring 2005 (see p. 2)

What is Security?

The consensus was that security is provided by building a just world and responding to basic human needs such as food, clean water, shelter, education, health care, clean air, and a healthy environment. Security requires a reordering of governmental and economic priorities away from the military/industrial/research complex. Justice and fairness are at once the product of and the conditions for peace, order, and good government, both domestically and internationally.

Defence and Foreign Affairs

Our analysis of the reports is based on the three concepts which are key to present Canadian defence policy ('development', 'diplomacy' and 'defence'), as well as the three pillars of present foreign policy ('prosperity', 'security', and 'Canadian values'). All participant groups indicated that development and diplomacy are the main tools Canada should use, and that these tools should provide the meaning and direction of defence.

In the **development** field, it was recommended that Canada invest the full amount of international help it has pledged (0.7% of GDP) to increase autonomy, protect food and water self-sufficiency, stimulate medical research, support non-violent movements in conflict areas, and develop green energy. A vigorous stand in the development and conservation fields would also increase employment and would require the termination of all subsidies to manufacturers of weapons or weapons components. This kind of development policy would also properly *build a sustainable prosperity*, since we know that Canada can fully

One of the reasons nonviolence is often neglected as an option is that many people are simply not aware of the possibilities it offers. We hope CC members will share this summary and/or the full report (available at <http://www.consciencecanada.ca>) with groups they are associated with and with elected representatives. It would be most relevant to the areas of responsibility of Foreign Affairs Minister Pierre Pettigrew and the Minister of Defence, Bill Graham.

enjoy security and prosperity only in so far as the rest of the world can partake in it.

Canadian diplomacy is crucial to the solidity of the second pillar of Canada's foreign policy – *security* – as well as for the promotion of universal values of peace, dignity, and justice. Canadian diplomacy should be deployed to set up mechanisms for early detection and de-escalation of potential conflicts and to train an international non-violent force in the spirit of the prevention roles indicated in the report *The Responsibility to Protect*. Diplomacy would require that Canada replace all weapons research, production, sales and deployment/use with support to organizations studying and promoting disarmament and non-violent conflict settlement.

Canadian defence was redefined by participants in these dialogues as representing the fundamental *Canadian values* “defending the world from hunger, cold, aggression, ignorance”. We ask that Canada move towards full conversion from military to civilian defence, shifting the focus to non-violence, conflict prevention, transformation, resolution, conciliation, and mediation, and to understanding underlying causes and reasons for conflicts. We ask that Canada initiate a full and transparent assessment of the impacts, loss of opportunities, and costs of research, production, and use of military equipment.

Alternatives for security and defence

A solid consensus among the participants is that **Canada's right to self-determination** (often called Canada's sovereignty) cannot be effectively or efficiently defended by military means from any significant invasion or from the appropriation of resources. Some of the alternative defence strategies suggested are to develop a sustainable and richly diversified national economy; increase the political will to refuse to bend to threats (including from the USA); move towards unarmed civilian defence; deflate the myth of 'terrorism'; delegitimize war domestically and internationally; strengthen the conviction in the centrality of common and global human security; lessen the world's economic and opportunity disparities and simplify our lifestyle, restoring and maintaining the health of the global environment; and build on the present abundance of small peace and justice groups that coalesce in times of emergency towards the creation of a stable and permanent

critical mass that would come to the fore as the present violent structures are more and more explicitly repudiated. The defence of human rights was felt to be our best 'defence'.

Canada must change the definition of 'defence' and of 'army', reducing and reallocating the military budget with a view to full conversion from military to non-armed, non-violent civil defence. This conversion would also imply stopping arms research, production and trade. We must adopt the six principles of the *UN Manifesto 2000 for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence* as the guiding principles of foreign policy.

The 6 principles of the *UN Manifesto 2000 for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence*, which Canada has signed, are:

1. respect all life
2. reject violence
3. share with others
4. listen to understand
5. preserve the planet
6. rediscover solidarity

The UN manifesto would also guide the 'Ministry of Peace' that would replace the Ministry of National Defence. Military alliances such as NATO & NORAD are perceived as obsolete and more a hindrance to than a protection of Canada's right to self-determination.

It is in the recognition that we are citizens of a complex and interrelated world that Canada's '**international peacekeeping role**' can best be defined. Canada would become the most secure and the most helpful country around the world if it were to re-establish its credibility as a peace-maker; shift trade agreements to favour human security and sustainable development for the whole world; refocus all its international missions radically to peaceful interventions and abandon all forcefully offensive of defensive action; undertake only peaceful, non-military, multilateral peacekeeping missions; and develop strict terms of reference never to be transgressed for its peacekeepers and international missions.

Canada could be very helpful in conflict zones if our envoys were deliberately trained for peacekeeping/conflict resolution. In the immediate future, it was suggested that Canada initiate a coalition for peace in Iraq using groups such as the Peace Brigades or the Christian Peacemaker Teams as models for the type of intervention needed. This would provide an alternative to the equally unacceptable positions of doing nothing or responding with armed force, which was mentioned in a number of communities.

Priorities and Conclusion

Collectively, as Conscience Canada, we undertake to work for the enactment of a conscientious objection act in parliament, to present the results of the CC dialogues to the

federal government and to oppose Canada's participation in any aspect of the US Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) project.

Individually, we commit to adopt a culture of peace and non-violence in our personal, family and community lives, to promote peace education,

and to work on a permanent basis to delegitimize wars and conflicts.

War as an institution and all that nourishes it must be totally and completely rejected. This report provides strong and credible options Canada could adopt for non-violent international and national security and conflict resolution. ☮

Never Again: Peace Education and Remembrance Day

Peace education kit by Jan Slakov

291 pages + 45-minute CD, © 2004, Grades K-12, \$29.95

available through the BCTF Lesson Aids service, lacatalogue@bctf.ca, catalogue # LA 9338

This kit includes lesson plans for a variety of levels, from K-12 (primarily in English, with some in French); a 45-minute audio CD of peace songs; and a CBC radio documentary about the Christmas truce of WW 1. The lessons are designed to promote appreciation for the many cultures and other wonders of our beloved planet and also to promote critical thinking in this time of crisis with many people, from local students to foreign authors, having contributed to it. In this International Decade for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World, it will help teachers and others promote nonviolence as a positive force, not just an absence of violence. For a table of contents, electronic versions of lessons, or to give input, email Jan at js@saltspring.com or call 250-537-5251.

Court Cases, Garnishment, and other Conscientious Objector Hardships

Dominique Boisvert, Vice-President of Conscience Canada

Conscience Canada is familiar with around half a dozen conscientious objectors to military taxation (COMTs) who have taken their case to various courts in Canada (the best known case being the one of Dr. Jerilynn Prior which lasted from 1983 to 1992). But there might be others.

As well, we know of a certain number of COMTs who have had their wages garnisheed or their bank account temporarily frozen by Revenue Canada in its attempts to obtain war taxes. It seems that the experiences of war tax resisters have varied widely from one case to another.

In order to help Conscience Canada and other COMTs, could you please share with us ANY positive or negative experiences you have had with the Canadian government or the Canadian Revenue Agency with respect to your actions as a conscientious objector, or any related cases you have heard or read about in your area?

In sharing stories of conscientious objection, please indicate what (if any) should be kept confidential and should not be used publicly (in the newsletter, on the website, or otherwise).

As an appetizer or an inspiration, have a quick look at the UK "Peace Tax Seven" website (<http://www.peacetaxseven.com>). You'll discover what a court case can generate as a political campaign. And you'll get a lot of information and ideas that might spark some new initiatives! ☮

REPORT: International Conference of War Tax Resistance/Peace Tax Campaigns

Dominique Boisvert & Marilyn Hébert

In July, the co-authors of this article (both members of the board of directors of Conscience Canada and active in Nos impôts pour la paix) participated – along with several other Canadians and some 75 persons of all ages from a dozen countries (Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, UK, Switzerland, Denmark, Colombia, Ghana, India and the USA) – in the 10th International Conference of War Tax Resistance (WTR) and Peace Tax Campaigns (PTC) in Brussels. In reflecting on our feelings about the conference we were *surprised, stimulated, motivated*, and we also felt *regret and admiration*.

SURPRISED: One of our first surprises was that Conscience and Peace Tax International (CPTI), created in 1994, is neither an umbrella body linking national conscience groups nor the organizer of the international conferences of WTR-PTC, initiated in 1986. The *raison d'être* of the CPTI is to lobby at the international level, mainly at the UN, with which it has consultative status, and before the Council of Europe.

Surprised we were also to see the enormous diversity in the conscience and peace tax movement around the world: Some are well-organized/financed/staffed, as in Germany, England, Holland and the USA; some are much smaller but surprisingly active given their limitations, such as CC and NIPP here in Canada, as well as those in Norway, Spain, Belgium, and Italy. In Third-World countries, such work seems limited to individuals or small groups focusing on resistance to war and/or the promotion of non-violence. Some activists would like all of their taxes directed to peace or to a peace fund, others focus only on the “military portion” of their taxes, and others want the right to monitor how their military money is being used, since taxes paid in one nation now serve to militarize another.

Another surprise came with the realization that this plurality of views and actions is complicated by diverse legal and cultural contexts. For example, Italy has obtained recognition of the right to direct some of their military taxes to international development or other charitable projects, while in some Third-World countries, citizens do not pay income tax, but are obliged to pay for the military through indirect taxation.

STIMULATED: This wide variety of approaches and situations raises a major issue that led to

some stimulating discussions: How can/should we best work together? We were pleased at the positive response to our invitation to initiate in their respective countries a collective dialogue and/or research on alternatives to war (see Conscience Canada Newsletter, Spring 2004, Number 86, p. 7). This model for a dialogue was adopted by conference delegates and participants as an international project leading up to the next international conference to be held in 2006. Stimulating also was the conference program; more details on that are available in the complete conference report, which is available at <http://cpti.ws/conf/04/04.html>

MOTIVATED: Indeed we were motivated to participate in a number of mechanisms serving as an informal follow-up structure to the conference. Dominique will be the contact person for the international dialogue project and Marilyn will compile in French/English the arguments and counter-arguments developed by various countries in the course of their lobby campaigns.

REGRET AND ADMIRATION: We regretted the denial of visas to delegates from Nigeria and Bangladesh; the latter, Lynnet Martin, was scheduled to lead a workshop on women working for a culture of peace and nonviolence. We admired Nana Secundus Sey from Ghana, whose much appreciated workshop, Voices of African Mothers, replaced the one Lynnet could not give. And we admired the courageous work being accomplished in India, in Ghana and in Colombia, as well as the courage of a number of those present for whom the issue of war tax resistance has meant court cases and seizure of property/salary.

We must admit that at times we felt overwhelmed by the multitude of challenges such a conference made apparent. However, we were also encouraged by this group of enthusiastic people, a certain number of whom have chosen a lifestyle of voluntary simplicity in order to dedicate their energy and time to WTR-PTC work or its equivalent in their respective countries. ☸

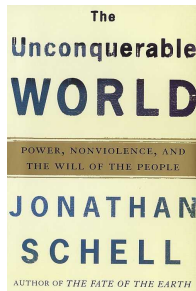
Heartfelt thanks to les Soeurs Notre-Dame du Bon Conseil de Montréal, les Pères Franciscains et une de leurs communautés locales, and le Fond social des Pères de Saint-Croix for their generous donations to assist Dominique and Marilyn to attend the conference, and to Development and Peace for contributing to the participation of delegates from Third World countries.

Book Reviews

Bruna Nota, President of Conscience Canada

We thought of linking together these two books because they bring two very different great minds, from different paths to the same conclusion: war is obsolete and humanity must find other ways to resolve its conflicts.

The Unconquerable World - Power, Nonviolence, and the Will of the People **Jonathan Schell, Metropolitan Books, 2003**



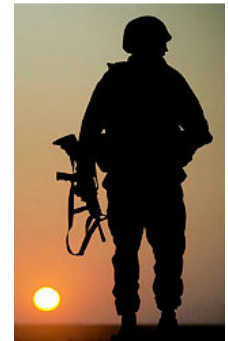
Jonathan Schell, in a historical, scholarly and analytical manner, describes how the role of violence in human affairs has reached a point of unlimited expansion. "Deterrence is only a stay of execution, not a reprieve. People's war immerses the people in the violence from which it seeks to deliver them. And yet...in reaching each of these ambiguous extremes, we can, for the first time, catch a glimpse of true rejection of the 20th century's terrible legacy of violence, as when climbers, upon reaching a mountain-top, and able to climb no higher, first see the new land beyond, and turn their steps down the other side." (p. 99).

Schell, surveying this "new land beyond", reviews the extensive cooperative and nonviolent history of the "power that flows from the people's freedom to act on behalf of their interests and beliefs... This power can be spiritual in inspiration but doesn't have to be. Its watchwords are love and freedom, yet it is not just an ideal but a real force in the world." (p. 387)

Letters Against the War **Tiziano Terzani, India Research Press** <http://www.southerncrossreview.org/Ebooks/ebterzani.htm>

Tiziano Terzani, who died recently at 65, was an acclaimed war journalist who had reported from Asia for thirty years. He spent his last years in reflection and contemplation at the foot of the Himalayas. Because he could find no British or American publisher, he had *Letters Against the War* translated into English at his own expense and made it available free of charge on the internet.

Terzani bases his letters on the premise that the cataclysmic fall of the New York twin towers was an occasion not to be missed to change the course of history, to imagine a different world, not to surrender to the inevitability of war as an instrument of justice or of simple vendetta. The different world Terzani invites us to envision would entail conscious evolution.



CANADIAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE  SECOURS QUAKER CANADIEN

FOR A MORE JUST AND PEACEFUL WORLD

Since 1931 Quakers in Canada have worked through Canadian Friends Service Committee.

The committee works in Canada and around the world on projects promoting peace, community empowerment, restorative justice, equality and sustainability.

Our work is divided amongst four committees: International Development, Jails & Justice, Aboriginal Affairs and Peace & National Concerns.

For more information and a free copy of our quarterly newsletter, Quaker Concern, please contact us:
CFSC, 60 Lowther Ave, Toronto ON M5R 1C7
Phone 416 920 5213 cfsc-office@quaker.ca www.cfsc.quaker.ca

In his "Letter from the Himalayas" he writes, "the idea that humans could break from their past and effect a qualitative evolutionary jump was recurrent in last century's Indian thought...Why not imagine this human being, with a new mutation, could become a more spiritual being, less attached to matter, more engaged in relation with others, less rapacious towards the rest of the universe? And, since this evolution has to do with consciousness, why do we not try, now, consciously to take a first step in that direction? The moment could not be more appropriate since this *homo sapiens* has reached the summit of the power, including the power to destroy the world with the weapons that, without much knowledge or wisdom, he has created." ☮

Are we Accessories to Military Crimes?

Dave Hubert

[Editor's note: Dave Hubert (author of *Canada @ Peace*) informed us of his intention to take the federal government to court over illegal acts committed by the Canadian Forces. The following is an edited version of the update he sent us for this newsletter.]

I've written letters to Ministers of Finance and Revenue requesting that they (a) assure me that Canada is abiding by the rule of law in all the actions undertaken by the Canadian Forces (CF) and (b) change the law to ensure that I do not become an accessory to the crimes committed by the CF if the CF violate the law. These letters have made specific reference to the murder of three Somali men by the Canadian Airborne Regiment in 1993 and the subsequent criminal cover-up by the High Command of the CF in 1997. Other examples of CF criminal acts are also cited. (A copy of the correspondence is available on request.)

The Ministers of Finance/Revenue, and their subordinates, who have responded to me have all assiduously avoided addressing the question. (Is the Government of Canada, as represented by the CF, abiding by the rule of law?) Their responses have addressed many other reasons for paying the military tax, but they refuse to address the central question that my letters raise. This week I received a letter from Ralph Goodale and, like all the others, he avoids the question of the criminality of the CF and my complicity in this criminality. I also discussed this matter with my MP, and told him of my plans to challenge the Government of Canada in court. My MP is sympathetic, but he cautioned me that no minister will agree that the Government of Canada or his/her department is violating the rule of law. (That's why this must be adjudicated by the courts.)

I've discussed the case and approach with a young lawyer, and he would like to take it on. He feels that it might be possible to get some support for the case under the Court Challenge program. He is now discussing the issues with his law firm.

I would much appreciate any perspectives that members of Conscience Canada or other sympathetic persons or organizations might have. ☺

Email Dave at dehubert@telus.net, phone 780-462-6234, or write him at 8107-44 Ave., Edmonton, AB T6K 0Z3



MY CONSCIENCE AT WORK... SUBSCRIBE - RENEW TODAY

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

There are two ways to join:

- *Conscientious Objectors to Military Taxation (COMT):* Member who has deposited funds into the Peace Tax Trust account maintained by CC.
- *Member:* Open to any person committed to furthering Conscience Canada's objectives and who pays an annual membership fee of \$10. This entitles you to receive CC's newsletters and to vote on all issues at the Annual General Meeting. (Please note: We intend to honour all "life memberships" dating from an earlier system.)

Annual membership: (\$10.00/yr): \$ _____
 Donations to Conscience Canada: \$ _____
 Peace Tax Trust Deposit (full or symbolic): \$ _____
 \$ _____ total funds enclosed
 (cheque payable to Conscience Canada)

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