

“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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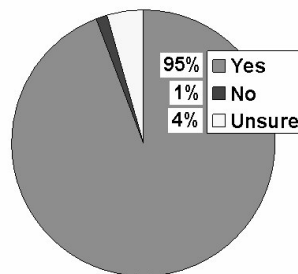
Conscience Canada Survey 2005

The federal officials and MPs we met during last winter’s lobbying trip to Ottawa often wanted to know, *“Who do you represent?”* and *“What are the priorities of your membership?”*. Good questions, which we also wanted to know more about ourselves, as well as needing to know who could help with the work of the organization. We undertook to survey as many of our members as possible. We couldn’t have done it without the help of about 20 volunteers to whom we offer our deepest gratitude.

Clearly, most CC members are indeed eager to be able to redirect their military taxes towards nonviolent forms of peacebuilding. However, CC is a very small organization, with a considerable number of elderly members who are no longer able to carry on with much of the work of the organization. We owe them a debt of gratitude for getting CC off to a great start and for their steadfast support over the years. We hope that by increasing our visibility in educational and youth institutions, we will find more people to

take up various aspects of CC work and to honour the legacy that the pioneers have given us. We are moved by the great deal of appreciation expressed for our work, and happy to receive the offer of some energy to carry it out. For example, as 75% of respondents were interested in contacting their MP, we are preparing a kit of

Would You Use a Legal Peace Fund?



lobbying materials for those who could use it. We plan to call on those (half of the respondents) willing to undertake specific and time limited tasks as the needs occur. A significant number were willing to undertake action in the area of lobbying and public education about

military taxation. These were much the highest priorities in the survey and have been the two major foci for the board in the last two years.

Nonetheless, it is clear that many people find CC to be invisible to the public and surprisingly, there was less support for membership building than we need, if we are to succeed in our goals.

The boundaries of the organization are seen as unclear by some war resisters who don’t consider themselves to be conscientious objectors. This is an issue the board has tackled this past year, concluding that CC is broad enough to include both religious/moral COs, and more secular antiwar protesters.

There is some degree of support for certain functions of the military, like relief in disasters and certain peacekeeping missions. The board has taken the position that we support peacekeeping if done by a force specifically trained for it; it appears that we have not been successful in

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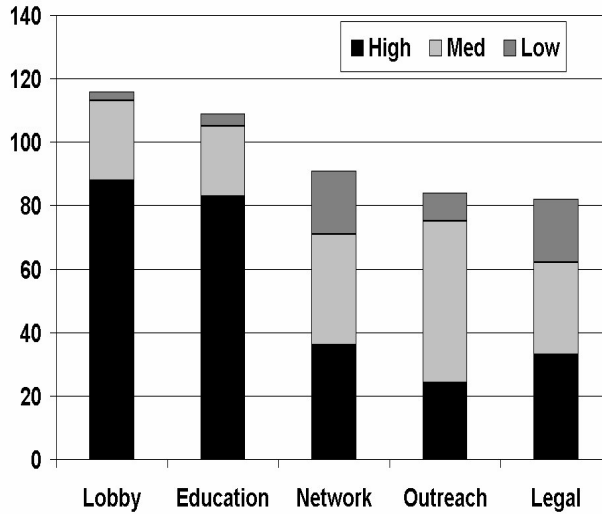
transmitting this message to the membership so we can't be sure we have widespread support for this position.

A number of people appear to have an inflated fear of Revenue Canada's actions when it decides to collect the resisted taxes. We would therefore like to publish some first person accounts from those who have withheld taxes in future newsletters.

People are asking for more specifics about tentative legislation. We are currently working on a new bill and there will be more certainty when the wording is resolved.

Inserted in this newsletter is the new CC brochure: we hope it will be a useful tool for members who would like to inform other groups, MPs, etc. about the possibility of war tax resistance.

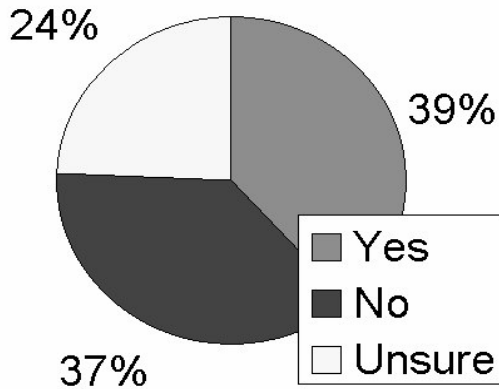
In conclusion, we are very gratified by the information this survey is providing us with about the membership's views on where we are going, and how we are going to get there. And happy for the offers of help towards reaching our goals.



Numbers of respondents giving each activ-

out of a membership list of 372, for a respectable 42% response rate. All percentages refer to the percent of those who responded to that question.

Interest in Support Group



Survey Method

We tried to contact everyone on our mailing list. We posted the survey on the website, informed all those with email addresses, and about 50 people responded. Out of 370 individuals, we could find phone numbers for about 200. These members were called by our group of 20 volunteers. We had 156 responses

Survey Results

An overwhelming majority responded positively to the initial questions; 87% are definitely conscientious objectors to military taxation (COMTs); 95% would use a legal Peace Tax Fund; 86% are very concerned about military taxation. 40% were interested in participating in a support group. 75% were willing to contact their MP, either by letter or in person. We have one or more supporters in the constituencies of 71 MPs.

Priorities for Conscience Canada, and Willingness to Volunteer

The top priorities for our membership are clearly lobbying and public education.

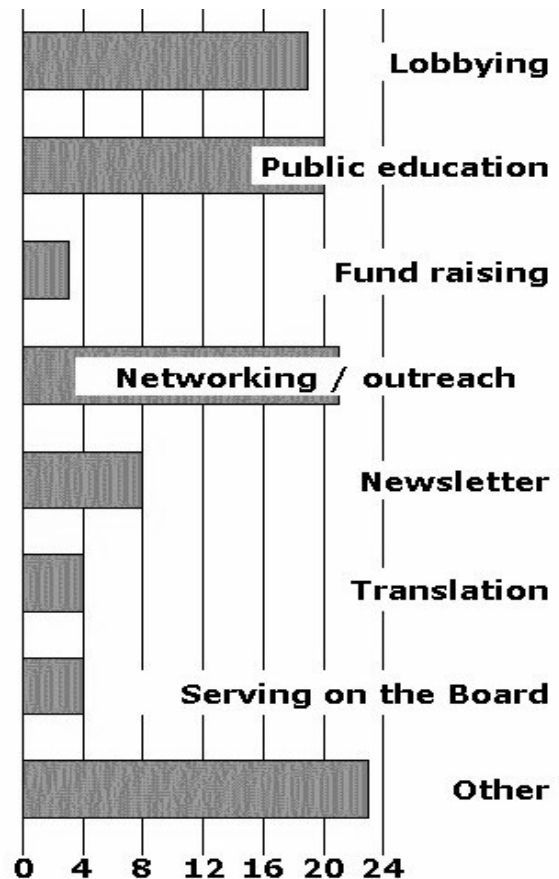
Other priorities identified by respondents were: getting more publicity, support for peacekeepers, supporting US war resisters, promotion of non-violent security building, and keeping Conscience Canada and the Fund going. Significant numbers were willing to get involved in public education, lobbying, and networking/outreach.

Themes of the Comments

General comments from our respondents were grouped into themes as follows:

1. Age and Health constraints: *I'm now 86 and have no energy for it.*
2. Appreciation: *I am just so glad you exist.*
3. Raising Conscience Canada's profile: *Need to make a breakthrough so people know about CC.*
4. The Voice of Experience: *(1) I have been a withholder of military taxes since the 1970s. (2) I have withheld some taxes in the past but Revenue Canada used some of next year's taxes to pay off the withheld amount and it was just too difficult to deal with.*
5. Information Wanted: *I want to hear stories of those who withheld their tax.*
6. Role of Military and War vs. Peacemaking: *(1) Sometimes there is a need for peacekeeping operations, like Rwanda. (2) I would prefer a peace fund used for nonviolent peacebuilding operations.*

Don Woodside is a long-time CC member, peace tax truster and member of the Religious Society of Friends who lives in Hamilton. Now retired from psychiatry, Don has contrib-



Areas of Interest for Volunteering

uted many hours to the CC Board, especially in the past few months, when he was coordinating our membership survey.

Excerpts from COMT letters

[... T]rying to defend ourselves through war making is not working. The United Nations recognized this and declared the current decade to be the "international Decade for the Promotion of a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World." [...] I would like the government of Canada to adopt the 'Agenda for a Just Peace', put forth by KAIROS, the Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives.—
Gail Lorimer, Burlington, ON

Although being deeply opposed to militarism I also believe that soldiers are not the enemy. Having friends who are in the Canadian forces, it has been my experience that many people

who join the military do so because they come from poor families and believe the military is the only way they can afford an education, or because they believe they will be helping people by being in the military. These highly principled people would be ideal for a nonviolent emergency force that was trained specifically to provide the kind of logistical and mental health assistance that survivors of disasters need. Instead they are deeply traumatized by their experience with violence in the military, both by what they have witnessed and also by things they have done [...] I want to pay my full share of taxes; I strongly support being taxed to pay for child care, health care, education, and subsidized housing. I simply cannot, in good conscience, contribute to military spending.—
Joshua Mira Goldberg, Vancouver, BC

Conscience Canada is blessed with a number of very generous members who volunteer both their money and their time to ensure that the organization's work continues. We thank each one of you to allow our work to continue. In the survey we just conducted, many of you expressed your appreciation for this work. Are you by any chance one of the supporters who have forgotten to **pay annual membership fees** (\$10.00/yr)? If so, please use the form found in this newsletter and send in your membership and any peace tax or donation.

I was appalled that Canadian troops bombed the retreating Iraqi army on the Highway of Death as they left Kuwait City [in 1991] and then described it as "shooting fish in a barrel". ... In this past year I have visited Iraq twice as a member of Christian Peacemaker Teams... Our team in Iraq has assisted in training a Muslim Peacemaker Team, and this new team is eager to spread that training, so that Iraqis can develop their own non-violent solutions to the current military occupation, violence and instability. ... I urge you to stop using Canadians' tax dollars for war-making and to start supporting peaceful alternatives such as this.—*Doug Pritchard, Toronto, ON*

I am a conscientious objector to participating in war fiscally. Since some of our money goes to war and military pursuits through taxation, I consider the latter to be fiscal conscription. [...] Since [...] I cannot act against my conscience, I am sending the military portion of my taxes to Conscience Canada to be held in the Peace Tax Fund in Trust.—*Marilyn Hébert, Ste-Sophie, QC*

"You can no more win a war than you can win an earthquake." —*Jeanette Rankin, first woman member of Congress*

"Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about killing than we know about living. We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount.—*General Omar N. Bradley*

Editorial note: Four members of the Christian Peace Teams group in Iraq are still being held hostage at press time. Readers who wish to join us in expressing their support for those who carry their witnessing to such extents can write to: Christian Peacemaker Teams - Canada 25 Cecil Street, Unit 307 Toronto, ON M5T 1N1 www.cpt.org / canada@cpt.org

This newsletter is produced by Conscience Canada, Inc., a non-governmental organization which has worked since 1978

- to promote a change in law to allow all Canadians the right to conscientiously object to military taxation as a right of conscience guaranteed under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms;
- to educate one another about freedom of conscience and conscientious objection to military taxation;
- to defend freedom of conscience.

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of Conscience Canada. An e-mail version of this newsletter is sent to members who have e-mail, especially those who have expressed a preference for this form of communication. If your preference is not being respected, please let us know.

Current CC board members:

President: Bruna Nota
 Vice-President: Dominique Boisvert
 Treasurer: Huberte Gautreau / Louise Dixon
 Secretary: Jan Slakov / Murray Lumley
 International liaison: Marilyn Hébert
 Members at Large: Joshua Mira Goldberg, Don Woodside

Sample Letter to the Minister of Finance

Dear Minister _____,

I was pleased to learn that the Human Security Report, an independent study funded by five countries, has documentation to show that the numbers of violent conflicts, genocides and gross human rights violations are actually declining since the end of the cold war. The evidence suggests that peace-building and diplomacy are much more effective than most people imagine.

I believe it is tempting but erroneous to assume that we cannot protect ourselves except through military preparedness. This assumption logically leads to the conclusion that so-called "preemptive war" is justified. Now that several countries have weapons of mass destruction, the dangers of war are unthinkable. If we want peace, we need to live peace and prepare for peace.

Building peace and protecting fundamental human rights are mutually reinforcing. It would be wonderful if Canada would update its commitment to respect the right to freedom of conscience. Since it is much more likely now, that our taxes (rather than our persons) will be conscripted for war, we need to recognize the

right to conscientious objection to military taxation.

Although I see that I do not actually owe the government any taxes this year, I am sending this letter to you and a symbolic contribution to Conscience Canada, in order to honour my commitment to live as nonviolently as possible.

OR

I send the percentage of my tax bill that would be used for military preparedness to Conscience Canada in order to honour my commitment to live as nonviolently as possible and to create conditions conducive to collaborative life.

In closing, I ask that you let me know if you will do anything to ensure that Canada respects the rights of taxpayers who would, for reasons of conscience, redirect their taxes towards nonviolent means of building security, rather than to military preparedness and war.

Sincerely,
Name:
Address:
Date

"I believe that an entire nation should not be judged by the wrong-doings of a few extremists."—*Marjane Satrapi, Iranian author of Persepolis, about her own and her country's history*

A Department of Peace for Canada?

Editor's introduction: Conscience Canada asked Hans Sinn, who has been involved with several nonviolent peace projects such as Peace Brigades International, the Nonviolent Peace Force and currently, in developing for Canada a Civilian Peace Service (CPSC) www.peaceservice.ca and Department of Peace, to write an article for our newsletter. If we succeed in obtaining the legal right to redirect our "defence" taxes into nonviolent projects, the kinds of work Hans describes below would be the types of initiatives where our taxes would be destined.

Civilian Peace Service Canada's mission is to recruit, train, and deploy qualified civilians to promote the non-violent resolution of conflicts and help to build a sustainable peace in partnership with local communities. Besides training and deploying unarmed civilians for peace building and peacekeeping, CPSC intends to work in a variety of other ways to promote peace. These include support for peace education and research, promoting human rights protection, encouraging democratic participation, supporting international disarmament and the control of the arms trade, etc.

When our CPS Development Committee examined what has happened to the German

CPS after it was successfully established in 1999 we concluded that we need in Canada a new Federal Department, whose sole purpose would be to work on peace and peace related matters. The German CPS has shown that a partnership between government and peace and human rights NGOs is possible, which is valuable to know. However, the German CPS has remained constrained in its development and has not become the major peace project foreseen by its early proponents: the Evangelical Church in Berlin Brandenburg and the Federation for Social Defence. The German CPS, instead of becoming an organization of thousands trained, unarmed peace professionals has become a minor unit of the German Develop-

The Working Group for a Federal Department of Peace has been working since 2003 to create such a department with responsibilities in conflict prevention, peace-building and reconciliation, both at home and abroad. Visit www.departmentofpeacecanada.com and www.peoplesinitiativefordepartmentofpeace.org about the global initiative. Contact sarbess@shaw.ca.

Is this going to work? Are we too ambitious? Historically we are in the process of turning peace work from an unpaid religious calling into a paid secular profession. This is a gradual step by step process, uphill

ment Service in the Department for Economic Cooperation and Development, with a budget of no more than \$ 40 million - if that.

In February of 2005 Nonviolent Peace Force Canada organized, in collaboration with St. Paul University in Ottawa, a Civilian Peace Service Consultation with the intent to build on and learn from the European CPS experience in general and the German experience in particular. The experience of our European friends tells us that our CPS Development Committee will be wasting its time unless we can put unarmed peacemaking and peace keeping on a professional basis and do so in the context of a new Federal Department of Peace (DoP). To establish this new DoP and run it in all its aspects at home and abroad will require an annual budget of a billion dollars or more.

Since our February CPS Consultation our focus has been on moving ahead with the

development of a training program for peace professionals (built on existing training programs in the UK and Germany) and writing a proposal for a Canadian Federal Department of Peace. We feel very fortunate that much excellent groundwork for the establishment of a DoP has already been done by the Victoria chapter of the Working Group for a Federal Department of Peace. Our combined efforts have resulted in the current, joint proposal for a Federal Department of Peace, plus Executive Summary and organizational chart.

and not always in the right direction. Our CPS and DoP undertakings are part of this larger historical movement. The movement has come before us and will continue after us, even and especially if we fail. The development of unarmed peacemaking and peacekeeping as a profession is, I believe, in a situation similar to that of medicine, many years ago, when nuns and monks cared for the sick and surgery was practiced in barber shops. There is a long way to go.

Hans Sinn immigrated to Canada after WW II, which came to an end before the then 16-year-old Hans had finished his stint in the Nazi SS boot camp. Canada is very lucky that Hans was able to make his home here; not only have we been enriched by Hans' commitment to peace-building, but also by his career as a builder of solar homes.

Worldwide Peace Tax Campaigns Up-date by Marilyn Hébert / February 2006

Encouraging news from Germany! In our last newsletter, we had informed you that the Netzwerk Friedenssteuer e.V., hoped to submit a draft bill, the Civilian Tax Law, which would set up a separate fund from the German Military Fund. Here's the latest news about this bill, as found in Conscience and Peace Tax International newsletter #2:

The working group on legislation had, in 2003, agreed that this bill would have two central features: first, all military expenditures would in future be financed, not from the totality of

Government revenues, but entirely from taxes on personal income; and second, each taxpayer would have the option as to whether their personal tax contribution should be spent for civilian purposes only or also for military purposes.

Two expert studies - on the compatibility of such a peace tax law with the German Constitution and European Law, and on the cost implications of such a law - have now been completed. These studies show:

1. that there would be no constitutional implications to such legislation
2. how it might be administered in practice
3. that there would be a once-off cost of well below 100,000 Euros in setting up the necessary systems, but that thereafter the marginal administrative costs would be negligible.

Strengthened with these new resources, our German equivalent organization of war tax resisters and peace tax campaigners have

launched a new round of lobbying. We wish them all the best!

Marilyn Hébert has been CC's International liaison person for the past 3 years and will continue to help us in this area on a limited basis. Her involvement in Nos impôts pour la paix and CC has its roots in many things, including the influence of Dorothy Day, years of work with ACAT (Action of Christians for the Abolition of Torture) and, of course, her long-time friendship with CC's vice-president, Dominique Boisvert.

**11th International Conference
War Tax Resistance and Peace Tax Campaigns
"War Tax - Responsibility - Peace Tax"
October, 26 - 29, 2006 Woltersdorf (near Berlin)**

Netzwerk Friedenssteuer (the German equivalent of Conscience Canada) will arrange the next international Conference in the Berlin area. The costs for accommodation and food are about 95 EUR. Frequent updates: www.peacetax-2006.com

**Official Notice:
Conscience Canada AGM**

Sunday, June 25, 2006 at 4.00 pm
Vancouver Friends House
1090 W. 70th Avenue (70th & Osler, near Oak)
Vancouver, BC V6P 2X9

Agenda:

- 1) Verification of quorum
- 2) Approval of the Agenda for the present AGM
- 3) Approval of the Minutes of the 2005 AGM (copies available)
- 4a) Report from the Board (work accomplished by Conscience Canada during 2005)
- 4b) Questions and Answers
- 5) Election, appointment or confirmation of board members(*)
- 6a) Presentation of the 2005 financial statements (copies available)
- 6b) Questions, Acceptance of the 2005 financial statements
- 7) Appointment of Auditors for 2005
- 8) Other Business
- 9) Adjournment and refreshments

* Note: The four officer positions required by our by-laws, and to be chosen from within the Board,

are President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary; in addition there can be Board members at large. Standing for re-election are: Joshua Mira Goldberg, Bruna Nota, Jan Slakov, Huberte Gautreau and Don Woodside.

Standing for election are: Louise Dixon, Murray Lumley and Bernard Ménard.

Let us know if you want to receive a copy of the by-laws electronically or by mail. Please if you cannot attend the Vancouver business meeting in person, do not forget to send in the proxy below for your vote.

All CC members and friends are warmly invited to attend the AGM and to stay afterwards for an informal gathering and refreshments. We hope that a member of the Christian Peacemaker Teams recently returned from Iraq as well as someone who went to court to promote the right to conscientiously object to military taxation may be able to join us. In order to encourage as many of you to attend as possible, one of our members has offered to help with costs and we are trying to find billets for those who need them. Please contact Jan Slakov (250) 537-5251 / js@saltspring.com if you can offer a billet or would like help finding a place to stay.

PLEASE SEE THE NEXT PAGE FOR MORE ABOUT THE AGM.

MY CONSCIENCE AT WORK... SUBSCRIBE - RENEW TODAY

Name:

Telephone:

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 who supports 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 honour all "life memberships" 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)

Mail to: Conscience Canada, 901-70 Mill Street, Toronto, ON M5A 4R1

Address Correction Requested

Please let us know if you desire more or fewer copies of the newsletter

**Introducing
CC Members Standing for
Election to the Board**

Bernard Ménard, O.M.I., has lived and worked in a L'Arche Community and in an inner city parish and now teaches at Saint Paul University in Ottawa. He is the author of a best-selling book connecting Biblical stories with current issues of nonviolence and compassion ("And what if Love were the strongest..", "Et si l'amour était le plus fort?"). He also distributes Len Desroches' books on the spirituality and practice of nonviolence (both in English and French).

Bernard will help keep alive the connection between the francophone and anglophone CO movements, especially as two of our Quebec board members are no longer able to devote

so much time to CC work. Many thanks to both Marilyn Hébert and Dominique Boisvert, whose work on the CC Board has been invaluable to us over recent years.

Murray Lumley, now living in Toronto, is a committed member of Christian Peacemaker Teams and has worked to promote peace and end militarism for several years, especially since his retirement from secondary school teaching in 1998. He participated in last year's Conscience Canada lobbying effort in Ottawa and has offered to serve as secretary for the board of Conscience Canada.

Many thanks to Jan Slakov for her efforts to keep Conscience Canada's records safely organized, and now to Murray, for taking over when Jan had reached the end of her abilities in this area:)

CC's AGM is being held during the World Peace Forum in Vancouver, June 23-28, 2006.

GRANT OF PROXY VOTE

I, (Please Print) _____, a member in good standing of Conscience Canada, do hereby grant my proxy vote for the 25 June 2006 Annual General Meeting of CC to: (Please Print) _____ or, in their absence, to any director of CC.

"We can only hope that, a truth, once seen, can be a part of the evolution of human consciousness."—Edward Burt, organic farmer, long time CC member