

Work For Peace... Stop Paying For War

Conscience Canada

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The School of the Americas Vigil Canadian Participation



BY DWYER SULLIVAN

On Nov. 21, 2 buses left Canada to join the largest annual peaceful anti-violence demonstration in North America. We converged on Columbus, Georgia for the annual protest at the School of the Americas, a U.S. military training institution for Latin American militaries and death squads, officially called the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. One bus left from London, Ontario, filled mostly with students from the Social Justice Program at Kings College and

the other from Kitchener, Ontario filled mostly with high school students from the Waterloo Catholic Board. Besides mourning the dead, marching for peace and calling for the closing of this terrorist training camp, everyone has the opportunity of choosing to attend over 70 workshops throughout the weekend. One workshop that particularly emphasized the goals of Conscience Canada was Moral Injury by the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship and the Center for Conscience and War. It described the results of soldiers betraying their sense of right and wrong, leading to post-traumatic stress and suicides (22/day of former US military personnel this year, up from 18/day last year).

The atmosphere surrounding the 6,000-8,000 participants is entirely peaceful and committed against war, militarism, drones, torture, etc. There were resource tables by the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund and also the National War Tax

Resisters Coordinating Committee. This is my 15th year in attendance and during this time our Canadian delegation has grown from 8 participants to over 100. As a Board member for Conscience Canada it is so inspiring to see so many groups of Veterans for Peace, Christian Peacemaker Teams, Pax Christi, Communities of Catholic Sisters, Unions, delegations from South American countries, and many, many high schools and universities. I am hopeful that this consensus against militarism and war will result in a willingness to not fund war.

Dwyer continues to inspire young people & others, including the CC board, to go the extra mile for peace. Read more about his work on p. 6.

Please Note: Last November Conscience Canada (CC) sent out a letter asking that our members confirm their interest in continuing as members of CC. If you wish to continue to receive the newsletter and to have the right to vote but have not confirmed your membership since Nov. 2013, this will be the last newsletter you receive.

To confirm your membership, go to www.consciencecanada.ca/membership/ or contact CC using the contact info above.

C O N T E N T S

CC AGM March 29	p.2
Speaking for Peace in Syria	p.3
Symbolic War Tax Resistance	p.3
Lessons from Mandela	p.4
Obedience, Power & CO	pp.4 & 7
Peace Tax: another option	p.5
Canada's Afghanistan War	p.5
Ed Abbott: in memoriam	p.6
Introducing Dwyer Sullivan	p.6
Membership form	p.7

CONSCIENCE CANADA

2014 Annual General Meeting (AGM Official Notice)

Date and Time: Saturday, March 29, 2014 at 2:00 pm

Place: Friends House, 60 Lowther Ave., Toronto
(St. George Subway Station, exit Bedford Road)

Speaker: Dwyer Sullivan, Peace & Justice Mentor (start time 3:30)

Topic: Training the Next Generation of Peace Activists

Agenda:

- I Approval of the minutes of the 2013 AGM (available upon request)
- II Review of the work done by CC during 2013
- III Confirmation of board members standing for re-election: David Bechtel, Mary Groh, Anna Kirkpatrick, Murray Lumley, Jan Slakov, Dwyer Sullivan, Eric Unger, Don Woodside
- IV Presentation and Approval of the 2013 financial statements (available upon request)
- V Appointment of auditors for 2014
- VI Final Transition to new federal rules for non-profit organizations

Break

VII 3:30 Talk by Dwyer Sullivan on

Training the Next Generation of Peace Activists

Dwyer Sullivan is a retired high school teacher of science, world religions and social justice. His involvement with youth has included coaching, camp counselling and archdiocesan youth ministry. He continues unabated to co-ordinate and lead social justice experiences for youth, including an annual trip to The School of the Americas in Georgia.

* * *

This notice constitutes the official notice as required by the Conscience Canada Inc. by-laws. Please let us know if you want to receive a copy of the by-laws electronically or by mail.

If you cannot attend the meeting in person, do not forget to send your proxy below for your vote, either by post or by e-mail to: info@consciencecanada.ca

I, (please print) _____, a member in good standing of Conscience Canada, do hereby grant my proxy vote for the March 29, 2014, Annual General Meeting of Conscience Canada to:

_____ or in their absence to any Board Member of Conscience Canada.

Signature: _____

“The argument from the Nuremberg trials to [...] more recent trials in Germany has always been the same: Every organization demands obedience to superiors as well as obedience to the laws of the land. Unrestricted freedom of conscience exists nowhere, for it would spell the doom of every organized community. All this sounds so plausible that it takes some effort to detect the fallacy. Its plausibility rests on the truth that “all governments” –in the words of Madison, even the most autocratic ones, even tyrannies,—“rest on consent”, and the fallacy lies in the equation of consent with obedience. An adult consents where a child obeys; if an adult is said to obey, he actually supports the organization or the authority or the law that claims “obedience”.

~ Hannah Arendt in
Responsibility and Judgement

A B O U T

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

- increase Canadians' awareness of the connection between taxes and war
- divert taxes away from war
- support creative nonviolent conflict prevention and resolution
- promote conscientious objection legislation

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of Conscience Canada.

An electronic version of this newsletter is available at www.Conscience-Canada.ca. Please let us know your preference.

B O A R D

Dave Bechtel, Mary Groh, Anna Kirkpatrick, Murray Lumley, Jan Slakov, Dwyer Sullivan, Eric Unger, Don Woodside

Mother Mariam & Nobel laureates speaking for Peace in Syria

In November former Conscience Canada board member Dominique Boisvert alerted the current CC board of the North American tour by Mother Agnes Mariam. She is a Melkite Catholic nun active with the Mussalaha group working for peace and reconciliation in Syria, which invited Nobel peace laureate Mairead Maguire leading a delegation of 16 people to visit the country.

Conscience Canada is well

aware that, historically, lies are often used to help whip up enthusiasm for war and so, although we do not have the means to check the veracity of all the statements by Mussalaha International and the Report & Appeal by Mairead Maguire, we decided to accept Dominique's offer to be our representative at a press conference about Mother Agnes Mariam's speaking tour in Canada.

To learn more about the report, go

to: www.peacepeople.com/?p=256

As board members of Conscience Canada, we do not want to stray too far from our core mandate, but we feel it is important to support non-violent efforts to end war. And, by checking information available via the internet and through personal connections we feel confident that our position in this instance is supportive of efforts to find humane and fair solutions with respect to the terrible violence in Syria.

A Canadian Symbolic War Tax Resistance Let's Go For \$20.14 This Year

BY DWYER SULLIVAN

At the School of the Americas Protest this year I learned of the "1040 Club". In 2002 the Sonoma County Taxes for Peace, a local California affiliate of the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee, launched its One Million Taxpayers for Peace campaign. Their goal was to get one million taxpayers to join the "1040 Club" by subtracting \$10.40 from any payment due to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) when filing their federal income taxes. Taxpayers who were owed a refund by the IRS were asked to enclose a note with their return requesting an additional \$10.40 from the IRS. (Note: 1040 is the number on the income tax form issued by the IRS in the United States).

This year, 2014, I am hoping that many many more Canadians who oppose war for so many different reasons will consider following Op-

tion A on the Conscience Canada website which is just writing a letter of opposition to their money being used to support killing others.

However, for those who wish to follow Option B (and again I hope there will be many many more this year), I am suggesting that \$20.14

"If a thousand men (people) were not to pay their tax bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure, as it would be to pay them, and enable the State to commit violence and shed innocent blood"

~ Henry David Thoreau

be a symbolic amount for this year. Boycotting this low amount of money makes a statement of conscience, while being so low an amount that penalties and interest are negligible. Likewise, any risk is negligible.

As you prepare your tax this year, be sure to consult www.conscience-canada.org and get the details involving Option A and Option B. The One Million Taxpayers for Peace (OMTFP), initiated in 2001 was an outgrowth of a "1040 club" and hoped to create a collective voice against war and violence that would be loud enough to break through the political and media barriers against dissent, as well as provide funds to make nonviolent conflict resolution a reality in every community.

"If a thousand men (people) were not to pay their tax bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure, as it would be to pay them, and enable the State to commit violence and shed innocent blood.:" Henry David Thoreau, "On the duty of conscience." Conscience Canada is striving to obtain those 1,000 participants this year in Option A or B.

Lessons from Mandela

BY MARY GROH

Did Nelson Mandela emerge from Robben Island a conscientious objector to war? Maybe the label is beside the point, the point being that he advocated for reconciliation and non-violent resistance, and with these methods and plenty of goodwill and negotiation he and many others managed to defeat apartheid. This they did whilst much of the world believed that such a black and white issue would be decided only by fire power.

Other major conflicts in our world are waiting for leaders with Mandela's principles to enter centre stage and rally people of goodwill to find negotiated solutions. The Israel/Palestine conflict has produced many such persons from both nations committed to working towards a peaceful solution. But international actors also play a major role. In the case of South African apartheid, economic sanctions and international condemnation were pressures which helped



Nelson Mandela

to weaken the oppressive power. In the case of Israel/Palestine, the oppressive power is being bolstered by Western governments. If it is true that Israel is the largest recipient of U.S. military aid (and the Canadian government is on the same team) we should be reminded that taxes in support of the Department of Defence work against the kind of peaceful and just settlement we would like to see, not only in Israel/Palestine but in other conflict zones. How much

more useful would be a Department of Peace.

This year put yourself firmly with the peace-builders like Mandela and put the "I" in Conscientious Objectors to Military Taxation (COMT). Say, "I" COMIT to directing the military portion of my income tax away from war preparation. You won't be sent to a forced-labour prison, but you will be making bricks to build democracy, humanity, justice and peace in Ottawa and around the world.

Obedience, Power & Conscientious Objection

BY DEREK WILSON

Derek Wilson, a life member of Conscience Canada, wrote to reflect on three books he read recently, which relate to each other in interesting ways.

First, through the "cornucopia" at the Internet Archive website, Derek e-read "the thrilling adventure story In the days of the Mutiny: a military novel published in 1895 by the British war correspondent and novelist George A. Henty (1832-1902). Set at the time of the Indian Rebellion of 1857, the principal character, Ralph Bathurst, suffers from a ner-

vous response to loud noises that, in certain circumstances, makes him appear cowardly and weak. [...] This novel is a remarkable study on the nature of and our attitude toward cowardice."

Then he e-read *The Conscientious Objector* by Major Kellogg, Judge Advocate, who participated in an American military commission to interview and analyze conscientious objectors.

In an introduction to the book Secretary of War Newton D. Baker remarks: "Although I had never set eyes on a conscientious objector, I

firmly believed that they were, as a class, shirkers and cowards". The purpose of the Commission was to find out if COs were merely cowards or?...

Then Derek browsed the transcripts of twenty speeches presented by the late American historian, author and activists Howard Zinn compiled in *Howard Zinn Speaks: collected speeches 1963-2009* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012).

Below is Derek's conclusion: In a speech on the concept of the "Just War" at the University of Bo-
continued on p.7

Peace Tax Action: Another Option

BY ERIC UNGER

You can take a small step toward a better world and away from a world plagued by war. Canadians who do not wish to feed into war with their taxes can make the clearest possible move to avoid doing so, thanks to Conscience Canada. According to Wikipedia ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Department_of_National_Defence_\(Canada\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Department_of_National_Defence_(Canada))) Canada's Department of National Defence is our government's largest department, both in terms of budget and staff. I wonder why our country, once known around the world as a peaceful nation, spends so much more on guns, bombs and bullets than it does on so many other things. What have Canadians done to others to justify the need for so much 'defence'?

As one who prays for peace, I would like to know that my tax dollars would never be used to deliberately hurt someone else. Conscience Canada, for over 30 years, has been confronting our political leaders with the rights of Conscientious Objectors to Military Taxation. Because our numbers are so small, however, political leaders are not much influenced. Why not take about five minutes to add your weight to our effort by going to <http://www.consciencecanada.ca/epr> and letting the government know how you feel.

Option A is a simple declaration of conscience which encourages our government to establish a Peace Fund for the benefit of those citizens who do not wish their

taxes to be used for war. Option B goes a step further and informs the government that the military portion of the income tax (this year 8.34%), or even a symbolic portion of it, is being diverted from CRA as an act of civil disobedience and deposited in the Conscience Canada Peace Trust Fund.

Here's what I do. It is a bolder step than A but avoids the civil disobedience involved in B. I write two cheques, one for the military portion and one for the non-military portion, both payable to the CRA. So I pay all my taxes, but on the memo line of the cheque for the military portion I enter 'for the Department of Peace'. The government of course does what it wants with my money, since there is not yet a Department of Peace. However, I believe I have at least made a personal statement for the record as to how I wish my money to be spent. And if a hundred, a thousand, or even more Canadians would do the same, the government might just begin to sit up and take note, and maybe even establish a Dept. of Peace. No matter which option you choose, please let CC know!

Another idea is to contribute a symbolic amount, say \$20.14, to the Peace Tax Trust Fund administered by Conscience Canada. See Dwyer Sullivan's article on p.3.

Here's hoping for a groundswell of COMT's speaking up this year at tax time.

Excerpts from: Canada's Afghanistan War: tragedy and travesty

BY ESTHER EPP-TIESSSEN, Public Engagement Coordinator for MCC Canada's Ottawa Office

With four suicides by Canadian veterans of the Afghanistan War in less than two weeks, it is imperative that Canadians ask some deeper questions about Canada's involvement in war.

[MCC representatives have noted :] "Our partners tell us that ISAF cannot win in Afghanistan. Children in schools that we visit often tell us, 'We hope that all foreign countries (including Pakistan and Iran) will leave Afghanistan, and we hope that our country can develop and take care of our problems.'

Canadians should not allow the Afghanistan War to vanish from their minds. The war was, after all, the longest war Canadian Forces have ever fought. It also assuredly shattered any semblance of Canada as a benign peacekeeper. Besides, too many people – Canadians soldiers, as well as thousands of Afghans – paid a terrible price.

Hopefully, the absolutely tragic suicides of Canadian soldiers will lead to greater commitment to treatment options for soldiers with post-traumatic stress. Hopefully, it will also lead to greater recognition of the travesty of war itself, and to a much more profound search for nonviolent means of resolving international conflicts.

Edwin V. Abbott – in memoriam

BY JAN SLAKOV

Ed, it seems to me, is the kind of person one would wish could have lived forever. His wife Vivien, who he met in 1940, provided a short but telling description when she said, “He was a good thinker. He was wonderful with his hands and he was a loving person.”

I feel honoured to have had the chance to get to know Ed and Vivien and other family members. Ed objected to war and to many other aspects of contemporary society, but that never made him bitter or hard.

One story Ed told me symbolizes his steady way of simply doing the right thing: For much of his career, Ed was the Medical Officer of Health in Scarborough, ON. At one point an “efficiency consultant” was sent in. This consultant found that Ed ought to wield his authority more and get things speeded up. Ed explained his point of view with a story from his childhood. His dad, who was also a doctor, would sometimes take Ed out when he went to



Photo of Ed & Vivien Abbott by Orillia Packet and Times

make house calls. Ed would get cold and be dying to get home, but his dad always said there was no need to rattle the reins or shake the whip as long as they were headed in the right direction, moving along at a steady pace.... Interestingly, on a recent CBC radio White Coat, Black Art program, Dr. Goldman was explaining how speed pressures have

resulted in corner cutting which is jeopardizing patient health.

Ed’s nascent pacifism was fostered when he read an article by Canon Raven, entitled “War is obsolete”. Canon Raven was a former Chair of the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

Ed Abbott, presente! May those of us left behind continue to keep your spirit alive through our own lives.

Introducing Dwyer Sullivan, CC board member

Dwyer is a father and grandfather and husband to Sheila for over 40 years. My 15 years membership with the Basilian Fathers of Toronto were excellent preparation for teaching high school science, world religions, world issues, and social justice. I have coached for many years, counselled at Columbus Boys Camp, coordinated monthly outdoor adventure experiences, coordinated the Toronto Catholic Archdiocesan Youth Ministry and participated in two Teacher Social Justice groups and started Parenting for Peace and Justice in Canada. My focus for the past 15 years has been initiating and coordinating social justice experiences for high school youth. This includes The Dominican Republic Experience,

The School of Americas Trip, a week visit to Catholic Worker houses, an annual Walk Against Male Violence, involvement with the One World Global Education Projects, and presently am coordinating Camp Micah: Leadership for Peace and Justice.

None of this could have been attempted without the strong support and involvement of Sheila and our family. As a result I have been blessed with many on-going, inspiring, and supportive friendships and relationships with many other like-minded people, including all those I have met at Conscience Canada. Let us all work together to help our world become less violent, and more loving and caring and respectful of each person.

continued from p.4

logna, in Rome, Italy, in 2005, Zinn observed that: “The American people did not rush to support the [First World] war. A million men were needed but in the first six weeks ... only about seventy-three thousand volunteered. And so the government needed coercion. It instituted conscription ... young men would be compelled by the threat of imprisonment to join the military.” So conscience seemed to have a broader influence than admitted by Secretary of War Baker. Many conscripts may have simply lacked the courage and self-confidence to buck peer bullying and the fortitude to bear court martial and imprisonment.

In a speech on “Civil Disobedience in the Twenty-First Century” at the University of Colorado, in Denver, in 2008, Zinn urged his audience not to be daunted because the government thinks it has power (only) “because everybody else obeys.”

“When people stop obeying, [the government’s] power disappears. When soldiers start disobeying, the

power to carry on war disappears. ... When consumers boycott a product, the manufacturer that makes that product is helpless. People have power if they organize, if they act, sometimes ... in acts of civil disobedience. It will take that to stop ... war and to make our country a different kind of country – a peace-loving country ... that uses its wealth not for war but for health and education and to take care of people.

In order for that to happen, all of us have to start doing something, any-

thing. Little things. You don’t have to do heroic things. ... Little things. The little things add up. That’s how social movements develop. Somebody does something small, somebody else does something small, ... You get a million small acts, and they merge at some points in history into a great force that brings about change.” (p. 239)

So take heart. That is what Conscience Canada and peace tax trust fund participants are all about.

Edited by Jan Slakov



“Wars are both complex and contradictory. This is what makes the current government’s embrace of a singular, celebratory version of history so confounding. Focusing on veterans may be a safe way to remember wars. It might even make good politics. But the abstract understandings of our wars being adopted seem to do more than celebrate the veteran. It is almost celebrating the war itself, as though conflict alone can inherently give birth to a nation. This is what many find distasteful, if not outright dishonest. By rejecting the complexity of the history in question we risk misunderstanding and, more dangerously, abusing the history we are supposedly trying so hard to revere.”

From “War & Myth-Making” by Jonathan Scotland

Conscience Canada

membership application / renewal

Membership is open to any person committed to supporting Conscience Canada’s objectives.

Address correction requested.

Name: _____ Dated _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

There is no membership fee but donations in support of CC operations would be greatly appreciated. Receipts will be issued for all donations. Persons completing this membership application will receive membership privileges for two years unless removal from our mailing list is requested.

Let us know if you would like to get involved in helping as a volunteer, or if you would like more (or fewer) copies of the newsletter, or if you would like other informational material.

Mail to: Conscience Canada, 8 Chandos Dr., Kitchener, ON N2A 3C2