

Work For Peace... Stop Paying For War

Conscience Canada

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The Gaza Doctor at the CC AGM!

Conscience Canada is honoured to be able to host Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish as our guest speaker for our AGM on April 9th. “The Martin Luther King of the Middle East” has spoken at the US Congress, also the Canadian House of Commons and the European Parliament; on April 9th he will be at the Danforth Menonite Church in Toronto! When the world seems insanely hopeless, it helps to think about how Dr. Abuelaish has lived his life.

He grew up in a refugee camp, a few miles from the family home, believing with his family that one day they would be able to move back. But eventually their home became the property of the notorious Israeli general, later Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon. By the time he was 12, Abuelaish was up at 4 every morning, working to bring in extra family income. When he was 15 the family home was bulldozed under orders from Sharon. An excellent student,



Dr. Abuelaish – a healer in all senses of the word Abuelaish earned a scholarship to study medicine in Cairo and then did postgraduate studies in obstetrics & gynaecology at the University of London. As a teenager, later as a doctor, Abuelaish has worked in Israel and has many Israeli friends. He has also witnessed great hatred and lived through the horrors of war.

In 2009, in “Operation Cast Lead”, the Abuelaish home was shelled. Abuelaish describes what he saw: “My children in parts. A decapitated head. And Shatha in front of me, with her eye on her cheek.” Guardian journalist Rachel Cooke describes: “The room was now a heaped mess of school books, dolls and body parts. Mayar, Aya, and his niece, Noor, were dead [...] Sha-

tha was bleeding profusely from her hand, one finger hanging by a thread.” “I thought: what can I do? And I started moving, fast. I thought of Shatha. I didn’t want her to be blind, to lose her fingers. I didn’t want that. Then I looked at my son. He has lost his sisters. Now what is he going to do? How can I protect him? Is he going to be an extremist, to be crazy, to hate the world?” [...] “I started to think. What can I do for those who are living?”

He had been communicating regularly with an Israeli journalist, Shlomi Eldar, so he called, hoping Eldar might be able to help get the injured children to an Israeli hospital for proper treatment. Because Eldar was live, on camera in Tel Aviv, the moments just after the attack have been recorded on Youtube. One can imagine how hard it would be to witness this, but I just did. (“Israeli TV airs telephone call to father after children killed- English” & “Gaza doctor – Israel”) For me, the experience is eye-opening; the steadfast commitment to overcome hate very powerful.

Abuelaish’s book, *I Shall Not Hate: a Gaza Doctor’s Journey on the Road to Peace and Human Dignity*, will be available for sale at our event.

Dr. Abuelaish believes advancing **continued on page 2**

C O N T E N T S

“Gaza doctor”

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CONSCIENCE CANADA 2016 Annual General Meeting (AGM Official Notice)

Date and Time: Saturday, April 9, 2016, 2:00 p.m.
 Place: Danforth Mennonite Church
 (TTC exit Woodbine Station, stay on north side and walk 1 1/2 blocks east to 2174 Danforth Ave. Street parking and public lot nearby)

2:00 BUSINESS MEETING

Agenda

1. Approval of the minutes of the 2015 AGM (available upon request)
2. Review of the work done by CC during 2015 and a look ahead (members' participation invited)
3. Confirmation of board members standing for re-election: David Bechtel, Mary Groh, Anna Kirkpatrick, Murray Lumley Jan Slakov, Dwyer Sullivan, Eric Unger
4. Election of new board member(s)
5. Presentation and Approval of the 2015 financial statements (available upon request)
6. Appointment of auditors for 2016
7. Farewell to longstanding board member Don Woodside

BREAK

**3:30 PUBLIC ADDRESS by Izzeldin Abuelaish (the Gaza Doctor)
 "The Cost of Peace versus the Cost of War"**

Questions and Answers

* * *

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, please send your proxy below for your vote, either by post or by e-mail to: info@consciencecanada.ca &/ or janslakov@shaw.ca

I, (please print) _____, a member in good standing of Conscience Canada, do hereby grant my proxy vote for the April 9, 2016, Annual General Meeting of Conscience Canada to:

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

I wish to direct my vote on items on the agenda as follows:

OR

___ I wish to convey discretion on the user of the proxy to vote on matters on the agenda or amendments. In addition, I do / do not (please circle) wish my proxy to be used to vote on appointment of directors and /or auditor.

Signature: _____

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health and education opportunities for women and girls in the Middle East is essential and so has established the Daughters for Life Foundation. May it flourish as a way to ensure that the death and harm to his children will not have been in vain.

Dr. Abuelaish will speak on "The Cost of Peace Versus the Cost of War". One might say he has paid "the cost of peace" dearly. But when one sees his inner strength, the choice of refusing to hate, of working towards peace and justice, seems the only worthwhile choice.

Jan Slakov has close relatives who are Israeli citizens and edits the CC newsletter.

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

The Power of One – One constituent, one MP...

Peter Tiessen, in the Manitoba riding of Provencher, was the first person to respond to our request that CC members meet with their MP to discuss the issue of peace tax legislation.

After the federal election, he promptly followed up on the idea. While Conservative Ted Falk is not interested in promoting a bill to help conscientious objectors to military taxation, he and Peter had an interesting and respectful discussion.

“Social and political change can begin with small actions and can result in big changes in consciousness. That is the power of one.”

We are still looking for an MP to bring forward peace tax legislation as a private members’ bill. We know Elizabeth May supports the idea, but she has another private members’ bill in mind. Liberal Borys Wrzesnewskyj voiced his support in 2009, stating:

“On issues of war and peace and human lives, citizens can and should be provided with the opportunity to be the guardians of our peace legacy. It is incumbent upon the government to respect these citizens wishing to follow their conscience. By giving the choice to those who do not wish to have their tax dollars used

towards war, we would send a strong message at home and abroad that Canada favours peace over conflict.”

Over the years, many NDP members have supported CC in various ways; there is reason to hope that we will succeed in finding an MP to sponsor a peace tax bill.

Remember the UNESCO constitution, which starts off, reminding us that, “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.”

Peter Tiessen’s words back up that view:

“We need to proactively engage ourselves and society in changing how we can deliver the message of peace and non-violent conflict resolution. Our thoughts create our actions. Without the mind shift that comes with routine small actions, our efforts will perish and failure will be inevitable. If left unchanged, these mental actions will soon turn



into patterns and create a very powerful and destructive feedback loop. Social and political change can begin with small actions and can result in big changes in consciousness. That is the power of one.”

Besides meeting with his MP, Peter made a presentation in his church supporting the call for peace tax legislation. And we are delighted that he is joining the CC board; watch for an introduction to Peter in our fall newsletter.

“I think the world is drowning in hate, and hate is destructive. It is a toxin that affects all aspects of life. It doesn’t just affect the individual who carries it, it affects the community. If I hate, who is going to suffer? Myself. My children. My relatives. My community. I will be disconnected from the world.”

- Dr. Abuelaish

New Energy for Conscience Canada

As former members will know, the board was seriously thinking we needed to prepare to wrap up Conscience Canada (CC) as an independent organization.

But many people we respect urged us to continue; we decided to see if we could find an intern. Dwyer Sullivan suggested Emily Mininger, “a very keen, organized and efficient young woman who has initiated Peace Quest, coordinated our meetings, sent out minutes, and has been working to network the various Kitchener-Waterloo peace groups



together.” Right about that time Jan Slakov was responding to CC emails and was embarrassed to see that she was at least a month late responding to a question Kelly Krauter had sent about her deposit to the Conscience Canada trust fund to our < info@consciencecanada.ca > address. Kelly’s phone number allowed Jan to call and discover that Kelly would be a great intern as well. The board decided to hire two, rather than one, but for 6 months, rather than a year.

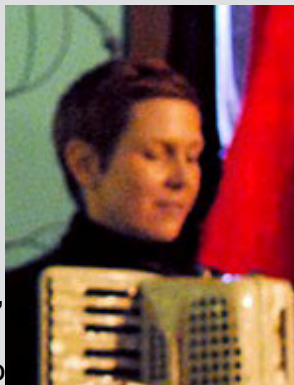
We are very pleased with the work Emily and Kelly have accom-

plished so far. This includes:

- Creating and translating the infographic comparing the cost of various military expenditures with humanitarian peace-building measures which is posted on our website and on the “cover” of this year’s Peace Tax Return
- Improving Conscience Canada’s Facebook presence
- Connecting with other peace organizations. Conscience Canada is now a member of Quebec’s Échec à la guerre, for instance.
- Currently, Kelly and Emily are preparing a press kit and will be reaching out to media, peace groups, etc. for our spring campaign.

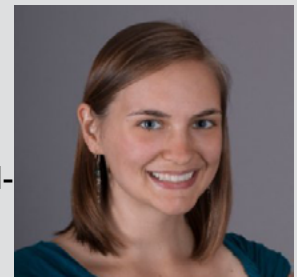
Kelly Krauter:

Since graduating from U of T with a degree in French language and literature, Kelly has worked for a number of community development, environmental and food security NGOs in Ontario and Québec. She lives in Montréal, and currently coordinates activities and communications for the Québec Network of signatories to the Principles for Responsible Investment. She’s working with CC to reach out to Montréal peace organizations and get the word out about the Peace Tax Form. Kelly sings and plays accordion. She has a green thumb, as well as a passion for social and environmental justice. She also likes cats, making things and riding bikes.



Emily Mininger:

Emily Mininger works as an academic advisor for the department of Psychology at the University of Waterloo. When she’s not helping students navigate their university career, she enjoys pursuing her passion of social justice and peace work. Emily graduated from the University of Waterloo Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) program in 2014. Since then, she has found related work doing research for the PACS department and starting a Kitchener-Waterloo affiliate of PeaceQuest. (See www.peacequest.ca for more info.) Emily has been working to increase Conscience Canada’s social media presence and investigate ways to publicize our presence on the web. In her free time Emily enjoys baking, ice skating, skiing, knitting, cycling, and playing board games.



Don Woodside resigning from board

When I first heard of Conscience Canada (CC) in 1983, it was love at first sight. The next year I organized a visit by Edith Adamson, the founder of CC to Hamilton, my home town. Since that time CC has been a vital part of my life and I want to take this opportunity to recall some of the highlights and gifts it has brought me.

In its first few years CC was very focussed on legal action, in hopes of setting a precedent legalizing Conscientious Objection to Military Taxation (COMT), but that effort did not meet with success. The next phase for CC was to try to pass a Private Member's Bill in the Commons legalizing COMT. We spent many years trying to make the Bill fit legislative criteria and the requirements of the Dept of Finance. It did stimulate my inner lawyer! But I learned more than I ever wanted to about the complexity of parliament.

The resuscitation of CC by Bruna Nota, Jan Slakov and Dominique Boisvert in 2002 drew me back onto the board, and was the beginning of wonderful experiences together. In 2005 our new expanded board spent a week lobbying in Ottawa. We visited MPs and bureaucrats by day, and plotted our next moves in the early morning and evening. It was exciting to be sharing this vital work with such dynamic and interesting people. We were amazed to hear support even from a high-ranking Conservative MP.

But as time passed we began to see legislation not as an end in itself but as an organizing principle to heighten awareness of the connection between war and taxes. This



Don with Jack Payden-Travers, director of the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund in the US, 2013

was a step in my own refocusing on nonviolence as a larger project than war tax refusal.

CC began its DVD project in 2005, and I was deeply involved with Bruna and others in the planning, filming, editing and launching. I especially enjoyed a trip to Ottawa with our producer/director to interview Bill Siksay, the MP sponsoring our Bill. The DVD gave

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me many opportunities to talk about CC. I was proud of it, and happy to see it on our website, but it was discouraging that CC continued to operate below the radar of most people in the peace movement.

One of the highlights of my organizing career was what we called a 'Loonie Poll for Peace'. On April 30 over several years a number of us dressed up with military helmets and peace symbols, and handed out loonies. We asked passersby to use them to deposit them in a jar to vote for military spending or peaceful purposes, and the tally was always

about 10 to 1 for peace. The press and TV loved it. And we never lost a loonie. I have had lots of opportunities to write and speak about COMT; usually to rather small audiences –once, no-one came at all! I recall one difficult TV interview many years ago. However a radio interview on CBC, a student radio show in St Catharines, and an interview for the United Church Observer, went much better! Experience helps.

My wife Harriet and I had an inspiring trip to the International Peace Tax conference in Washington DC in 2000, meeting Americans who had made much greater personal sacrifices than I had, and hearing about the variety of COMT campaigns in different countries

In summary my work with CC has provided me with years of challenge, learning, excitement, discouragement and satisfaction. Best of all have been the working relationships with the wonderful people on the board over these years. So why am I stepping down? I have been tremendously impressed by the new people who have joined the board in the last few years, and want to make room for more. I know that my energy for this work is waning. It is time to find a new focus which will reinvigorate my energy for peace and social justice. The first step will be a Quaker group sponsoring a Syrian refugee family. And who knows what else?

Don Woodside is the only person who was on the CC board before the major changeover in 2002 and who has continued on for 14 more years!

Is Paying for War Illegal?

BY JAN SLAKOV

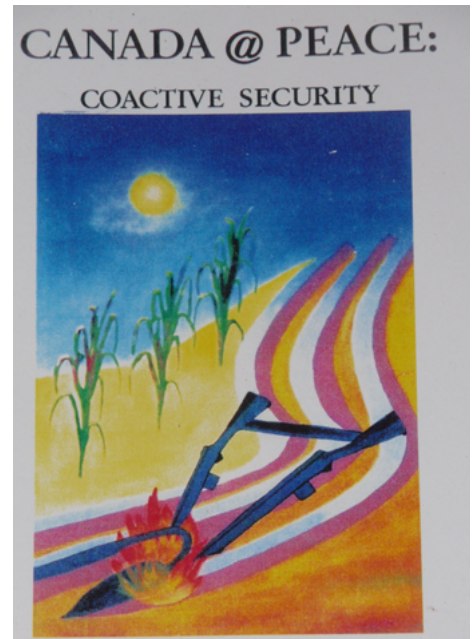
The US National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee reports that, in England, a man has served a jail sentence for refusing to pay war taxes. Christopher Cloverdale was sentenced to 42 days in jail after withholding local council taxes. Cloverdale has argued that British taxpayers and governments are responsible for criminal acts of war; therefore the most reasonable response is for taxpayers to refuse to pay. The letter was supported by various documents, including text of sections from The Terrorism Act 2000, The International Criminal Court Act 2001 & the Judgement of the Nuremburg War Crimes Tribunal 1946.

Dave Hubert, executive director of Canadian Peacemakers International, has made similar arguments in his "peace tax" letters over the years. He has cited several exam-

ples, including these:

"I note that in 2007 the Canadian Forces were charged with turning Afghan prisoners over to others, who subsequently tortured them. This is contrary to international law and the first clause of the Third Geneva Convention (1949) to which Canada is a signatory."

"Several years ago the Government of Canada awarded survivors of the Suffield biological testing programs of the 1950s over \$50,000,000 in compensation for the health problems those subjected to this illegal testing were exposed to. Currently, an inquiry is underway about compensating the victims of the testing of Agent Orange and Agent Purple at CFB Gagetown beginning in 1952. Heavy exposure to lower ranks of the military occurred in the 1960's. This testing was also the result of criminal decisions and criminal behavior of com-



manders of the CF."

Dave Hubert is also the author of *Canada @ Peace: Coactive Security*. The book provides a vision of how Canada could foster a culture of peace and become a peacebuilder of the world. Copies of the book are available from Dave for \$25.

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.
