## **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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### **GREETINGS**

We are pleased to present to you the first newsletter from the new Board of Conscience Canada. Our intention is to promote as much interaction as possible among the members and the COMTs (Conscientious Objectors to Military Taxation).

You will find, inserted in this newsletter, a leaflet about Conscience Canada. We have made a small run because we did not have much money, but more importantly we wanted it out soon and we want to have input on how to make it better. Already a number of suggestions have been received as we distributed them widely during the anti-war on Iraq protests. Please give us your input on how to better describe what CC stands for.

Our plan is to publish two newsletters per year. The first newsletter each year will provide the necessary instructions about tax redirection as well as a model letter to

accompany your tax return explaining to the government the reasons for your redirection of a portion of your taxes. In the fall we plan to provide an update on the Canadian and international COMT cases presently defending the right of conscience in the courts or at the United Nation's Human Rights Commission.

Please take note of the official announcement of our upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM), included with this newsletter.

Working together for peace and justice,

Maryse Azzaria, QC Dominique Boisvert, QC Bruna Nota, ON Jan Slakov, BC Iane Orion Smith, ON Don Woodside, ON

CONSCIENCE CANADA 901-70 Mill Street Toronto ON M5A 4R1

# THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR TO MILIARTY TAXATION (COMT) AS A REVOLUTIONARY PACIFIST

by Bruna Nota

The very institutions of war and killing are abhorrent to the people who choose peace as their way of being in society. The Conscientious Objector, both physical and fiscal, is objecting to the prevailing acceptance of the concept that it is acceptable or useful to kill to defend our country. There is great consensus in the world that 'peace' is a desirable good. Why is it that there is no consensus on how to achieve it? I found it very useful to reflect over the thesis presented by Prof. Anatol Rapoport.

He maintains that the way people perceive the problem of lack of peace determines the solutions sought and all the actions and means used (see table below). By becoming aware of this fact we are better able to both situate our efforts and to engage in meaningful dialogue with others whose actions are rooted in a

different perception of reality. We may also become more effective in our work.

As a Conscientious Objector to Military Taxation (COMT) I situate myself in the last column. I perceive the central problem to be the institution of war. If in some way, at some level, we accept the need for the institution of war, we in the peace movement spin our wheels when we oppose the latest atrocity, the newest weapon. We will be truer to ourselves and more effective in our activism if we totally reject the institution of war. It is only when we totally reject the institution itself that we are true to ourselves and in the bargain we start to be effective. The establishment of the rule of law, and an ongoing effort towards personal improvement are necessary but not sufficient elements to achieve and maintain peace. The missing and essential ingredient is the total rejection of the very institution of war.

Conceptions of Peace and Their Concomitants (Adapted from Anatol Rapoport "PEACE, an Idea Whose Time Has Come")

	Peace through	Balance of Weapons	Collective Security	Peace through	Personal Pacifism	Revolutionary Pacifism
D 11	Violence	D'		Law		/mi
<u>Problem</u>	External	Dis-	Aggressor	Int'l	Human	The Institution of
	Threat	equilibrium	States	Anarchy	Aggressiveness	War
Solution	Military	Balance of	Collective	World	Self-perfection	Abolition
	Might	Weapons	Sanctions	Law	_	
Principal	Military	Military and	States-	Jurists,	Individuals	Grass Roots
Actors	Elites	Diplomatic	Persons	Political		Movements,
		Elites		Scientists		Community
Types of Social	Threat	Trade	Trade Threat*	Integration	Integration	Integration
Control		Threat*	Integration*			
Induced	Pugnacity,	Prudence	Solidarity,	Civility	Love, Stead-	Global
<u>attitudes</u>	Fear		Vigilance	,	fastness	Awareness
Peace-keeping	None	Low to	High	Very High	None	Low
<u>Role</u>		Moderate		_		

<sup>\*</sup> Factors regarded as secondary

By refusing to contribute to finance this institution we work for its total abolition and we open the real possibility of peace. Peace as absence of fear. Peace is integral to a

community of equals, in which the dignity of each is fully respected. It is a revolutionary position.

#### Taxes for Peace - Here's How to Do It

Until a CO Bill has passed into legislation, Conscience Canada provides a positive option for *Conscientious Objectors to Military Taxation (COMT)* to deposit that portion of their income taxes into a Peace Tax Trust Fund as a formal objection to paying to kill. For the Fiscal Year ending March 31, 2002 federal government military-related expenditures, calculated on the basis of selected expenditures from the Public Account of Canada available to us at this time, amounted to 7.8% of the total government expenditures. There may be other expenditures related to defence that are in addition to this percentage. We suggest the following procedure:

1. Complete your Income Tax Form as usual, down to Balance Due.

- 2. Go back to Net Federal Tax line. Calculate 7.8% of the amount you entered on this line.
- 3. Make out a cheque for this amount to Conscience Canada Peace Tax Fund In Trust, and send it to Conscience Canada, 901-70 Mill St. Toronto ON M5A 4R1. Be sure to make a copy for your records.
- 4. Write a letter to John Manley, Minister of Finance, House of Commons, Ottawa, ON K1A OA6, telling why you wish to have your taxes supporting peace rather than killing, teaching others to kill, making and selling lethal weapons and preparing for war. Indicate that you have directed the military portion of your income taxes to the Peace Tax Fund in Trust. Make eight copies of this letter.
- 5. Send the following to your local Tax Centre: -your completed Income Tax form, your cheque to the Receiver General for the Balance Due (less the amount of the cheque derived from step #3),
- a copy of the cheque in #3, and
- a copy of your letter to the Minister.
- 6. Send the original letter to the Minister and a copy to Conscience Canada for possible use in the newsletter.
- 7. Send other copies of your letter (postage free!) or via E-mail to the following MPs:
- -Stephen Harper, Leader of the Alliance Party,

#### harper.s@parl.gc.ca;

- -Gille Duceppe, Leader of the Bloc Quebecois, duceppe.g@parl.gc.ca;
- -Bill Blaikie, Parliamentary Leader of the NDP, blaikie.b@parl.gc.ca;
- -Joe Clark, Leader of the PC, <u>clark.j@parl.gc.ca</u>; -Svend Robinson, MP, <u>robinson.s@parl.gc.ca</u>, and -your own MP at House of Commons, Ottawa, ON K1A OA6.
- 8. You may also wish to write to your local newspaper and/or to Canadian magazines of your choice, to the same effect. Send your letters addressed to Dear Editor. Conscience Canada will deposit your cheque in the Trust Account and refund it any time on your request. Please specify if you want the interests on your deposit kept segregated or if they can be used for the CC work. We cannot guarantee that you will not be subject to collection by Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) from your bank account, garnishee from salary or seizure of goods and chattels for this amount they consider in "arrears." In the event of collection by CCRA, CC will refund you on request your deposit, and also the accrued interest if you have so specified. Conscience Canada may be unable to cover the full amount of interest CCRA may charge you on these arrears, as their interest rate is usually higher than the amount we obtain on the Trust Account. So far, to our knowledge, no goods and chattels have been seized in Canada for non-payment of war taxes. In general, only larger amounts, over several hundred dollars have been collected. Some COMTs have had collection in following years from refunds due. By now, all COMTs have probably had GST refunds seized. PLEASE NOTE: If you have all your taxes deducted at source, as 85% of taxpayers do, you can deposit a symbolic amount in the Fund and write a letter as described above (4). Or you can support the work and goals of CC by becoming a member (see Subscription form on back of newsletter).

# SELECTED EXPENDITURE FROM THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF CANADA FISCAL YEAR 2002

Canada's involvement in militarism is significant: Total Military & Related Expenditures: \$12,791,675,719

Total Federal Government Expenditures: \$164,408,285,000

Department of National Defence.......\$12,243,536,657
Canadian Security Intelligence Service.....\$248,589,064
Security Intelligence Review..........\$2,037,255
Atomic Energy of Canada Limited........\$211,240,000
Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission.....\$58,467,431
Canadian Commercial Corporation.....\$15,831,000
NAFTA Secretariat...........\$1,881,556
National Battlefields Commission.......\$10,092,756

## 7.8% of Canada's budget was spent on the military in 2001 – 2002.

SOURCE: Public Accounts of Canada 2000-2001. Departments and agencies reported are those which have defence related activities, as released under the Freedom of Information Act. Some NATO expenses are included in the total DND expenditure. The total percentage does not include Veterans Affairs, Emergency Preparedness or the military portion of the deficit, nor does it take into account the arms trade.

#### SAMPLE LETTER FOR SUPPORTING COMT

The two middle paragraphs of this letter were lifted from one sent by Walter and Margaret Taylor, published in the March, 1999 Conscience Canada newsletter. Walt died in June 2002 but his work lives on. His book, Waging Peace for a Living: an Action Plan for Survival of Life on Earth, is available from Trafford Publishing for \$17.95 + shipping and handling. To order call (250) 383-6864, fax: (250) 383-6804 or visit: www.trafford.com/robots/99-001.html or e-mail: <patricia@trafford.com>.

In addition to writing to the Finance minister, your MP and leaders of the federal parties, you may want to write to the Minister of Revenue (Eleanor Caplan) and the critics: Bloc Québecois: Gilles Perron, Canadian Reform-Conservative Alliance: Rahim Jaffer, NDP: Lorne Nystrom, Progressive Conservative: Bill Casey. Finance critics are: BQ: Pierre Paquette, Alliance: Charlie Penson, NDP: Judy Wasylycia-Leis, PC: Scott Brison (and the Minister is, of course, John Manley, Liberal)

You can write to any MP as follows: the Honourable (or "the Right Honourable" for current or former prime ministers) \_name\_, House of Commons, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6. Mail sent to the House of Commons goes postage-free. (You can write "OHMS" (on her majesty's service) in place of the stamp.) You can obtain other contact information by calling the Information Canada number at the beginning of the blue pages: 1-800-OCANADA (1-800-622-6232).

The new NDP leader does not yet have a seat in the House so here is his contact info: Jack Layton, NDP Operations, 85 Albert St., Ste. 802, Ottawa, ON K1P 6A4. e-mail: ndpadmin@fed.ndp.ca.

Dear Minister Manley,

I cannot, in conscience, contribute to preparing for war or war-making. It is vitally important to me that the government pass a bill to enable those of us who are conscientious objectors to military taxation (taxes used for producing, selling and buying weapons, and sending others to kill or to be trained to kill) to redirect the military portion of our taxes towards non-military means of security-building.

Canada has recognised the rights of conscientious objectors to military service since 1793. During times of military conscription, alternative non-combatant service has been arranged for Canadians who cannot participate in war for reasons of conscience.

Today my tax dollars, instead of citizens, are being conscripted for military service. There are Canadian precedents for recognising conscientious objectors to paying for military purposes. In 1841, CO's to the military tax were allowed to redirect the taxes to public works. In the First and Second World Wars, CO's to war bonds were allowed to buy a special series of government bonds (peace bonds) whose proceeds were used only for the relief of suffering caused by war.

Please let me know what, if anything, you will do to help ensure that my right to freedom of conscience be fully recognised in law by the federal government. MP Svend Robinson has been working on this matter for many years and could provide you with information on the proposed CO Bill for recognising fiscal conscientious objection.

Sincerely,

(Your name and full address, not your S.I.N.)

#### Sample Letter

#### REGIONAL NEWS AND CONTACTS

Several COMT and members have expressed the desire to be in contact with like-minded people in their areas. We do not want to give out names without explicit consent from each and we do not have the resources to be an effective clearing-house. One way would be for members or COMTs to indicate to us (address below) their willingness to be a contact person for their area. We would publish these names in the fall newsletter and maintain such a list on an ongoing basis. As a start, we know of four people who would be happy to hear from other interested people in their area:

In Hamilton: Don Woodside

<woodside@mcmaster.ca> (905) 522 8048

In Moncton: Huberte Gautreau

<gauthube@nb.sympatico.ca> (506) 382-5911

On Salt Spring Island: Jan Slakov <<u>is@saltspring.com</u>> (250) 537-5251

In Toronto: Bruna Nota

<<u>consciencecanada@sympatico.ca</u>> (416) 203-1402

Bruna has a specific initiative/ request for all Toronto Area COMPT and CC members. We have booked the display table at the Metro Credit Union at 800 Bay St. (at College) on the days of March 5th to 7th (Wed through Fri) from 9:30 a.m. to the end of the business day (4:00 p.m. on Wednesday and 6:00 p.m. on Thursday and Friday). It is tax time and it is the time people consider what their taxes are used for. We'll need volunteers. Please let Bruna know (see coordinates above) if you are able to help with covering any slot in 'staffing the table'."

#### "CONSCIENCE" IN MANY LANGUAGES

Several members of the current board of Conscience Canada (CC) are happy to discover that we are able to communicate with each other in English and French. We have discovered that one faithful CC member in New Brunswick is glad too, for she would like to reach out to more people but needs material in French. The following article was originally written in French and is available from Jan Slakov <<u>is@saltspring.com</u>> or from Dominique Boisvert <<u>domfeldi@internet.uqam.ca</u>>.

We encourage francophones to make contact with Nos impôts pour la Paix, the Quebec group whose address you will find at the end of the article entitled "Sounds Familiar?"

We may even branch out from Canada's official languages. Marya Nyland has done a wonderful job supporting both the previous board and the current board, and, along with her husband Phil, has attended several international conferences on fiscal conscientious objection. Marya, who speaks several languages, may be able to help those of you who need something in a language other than French or English.

In the meantime, we can enjoy diversity in a small way, by learning how to say and write "peace" in several languages. People around the world are wearing white armbands to make visible their desire for peace. I have the words to peace in many languages on mine. You can find more information on a most useful web site prepared by Janet Eaton:

http://hfxpeace.chebucto.org/armband.htm

Once I mention Janet's name, this article is in danger of digressing even more, for Janet is doing all sorts of wonderful inspiring stuff. To keep this article short, I'll just direct you to 2 other web sites she has prepared:

http://www3.ns.sympatico.ca/jmeaton/war/
(on the ecological consequences of the Kosovo war, & war in general); and

http://www3.ns.sympatico.ca/jmeaton/wsf/photos.htm (with photos, observations and links from Janet's participation in the World Social Forum held in January, 2003 in Porto Alegre, Brazil)

I think it is fitting to close this with a quote from India's Arundhati Roy (author of *The God of Small Things* and defender of the Narmada River and its people): "Another world is not only possible she is on her way. On a quiet day I can hear her breathing." - Arundhati Roy, Porto Alegre, Brazil, January 27, 2003

#### **SOUNDS FAMILIAR?**

by Maryse Azzaria

You might have heard about "Nos impots pour la paix" (NIPP) a Quebec based group working to promote a change in the law to allow for conscientious objection to military taxation. Sounds familiar? The group started in 1987 and was inspired by Conscience Canada. It functions in much the same way.

Having a French speaking Quebec organisation working separately from its English counterpart simply reflects the reality of Canadian politics. We have our own peace fund where members deposit the portion of their taxes that would serve for military purposes. Some of our members have had their salaries seized, others have had their GST return withheld. Sounds familiar? Our goals are basically the same; we call ourselves "objecteurs de conscience fiscale", which is the equivalent of conscientious objectors to military taxation".

Being smaller in numbers, our way of functioning is simpler; NIPP is not incorporated. Members fees

(\$5.00 a year) cover operating costs, which are mostly postage and printing. Interest generated by the peace fund is given to organisations working for peace; this is often a symbolic gift: our interests last year totalled less than 400.00\$. We publish only one news-bulletin a year, during income tax season, and hold one general assembly in the fall.

As more talk of war and terrorism keep echoing, we want to keep alive the small flame of hope, hope that peace is not a dream, but is possible if everyone would let their conscience be their guide. Sounds familiar?

You can visit our Website, or reach us by mail, email, FAX, or telephone. NIPP's address: 14425, chemin Royal, Saint-Laurent d'Orléans, Québec, G0A 3Z0 < nipp@cam.org > < www.cam.org / ~ nipp > Telephone: (450) 831-4631 FAX: (450) 831-1149. We are exploring the possibility for CC to share the NIPP's web site

#### FISCAL CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

by Dominique Boisvert

(translation by Jan Slakov of an article which appeared in the March 2003 issue, # 683, of the journal 'Relations'.) CET ARTICLE EST DISPONIBLE EN FRANÇAIS AUSSI

How does one refuse to participate in war-making without taking the law into one's own hands?

President Bush has been preparing for war for months now. Many people are strongly opposed to this, but feel themselves to be helpless. However, we can reject this war, by refusing to pay for it!

Money is much more necessary to modern wars than "cannon fodder": armies have less need of soldiers (career officers suffice) than they do of money (for modernising and developing increasingly sophisticated equipment). Modern weaponry has transformed war for the Western world: "smart" weapons, unmanned planes, zero casualty counts (for our side, obviously!). Former U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig made it clear when he remarked, as he watched an anti-war demonstration: "Let them demonstrate, just as long as they continue to pay their taxes."

# When is Our Choice One of Conscientious Objection?

Most people who refuse to pay the military portion of their taxes do it for reasons of conscience (on religious, moral or humanist grounds): they refuse, under all conditions, to kill, to learn to kill or to prepare themselves for killing. For them, refusing to pay for others (people or arms) to do it in their stead or in their name is nothing more than the logical extension of their own refusal to serve in the military. Fiscal conscientious objection is the modern form of traditional conscientious objection, which has been recognised in Canada since as far back as the Militia Act of 1793.

Others, who are not unconditionally opposed to all war, believe nonetheless that it is preferable to emphasise alternative methods rather than the use of traditional military force, or they are unequivocally opposed to certain specific conflicts which they consider unjustifiable. These conscientious objectors can refuse to pay their military taxes, by redirecting such taxes to more peaceful ends.

In all cases, however, the determining criterion of conscientious objection is the acceptance of assuming the consequences of one's choice. This is more than merely indicating a preference, as one would do in an opinion poll; this is the concrete and duly considered act of a citizen who refuses to participate by their complicity in an activity they find unacceptable.

This is not a way to get out of paying taxes: conscientious objectors place their military taxes in a trust fund while waiting for the Canadian government to commit itself to use these taxes in a peaceful way only. Until then, the government charges interest and penalties on these taxes which have already been paid out but which it considers, regardless, as unpaid!

#### Anarchy or Social Solidarity?

Some may say: "If each person pays only those taxes which suit them, government will no longer be possible!" And they are correct! Fiscal conscientious objection is not an individualist or irresponsible act, nor is it a call for "each to themself". On the contrary, conscientious objectors are well aware of the importance of social cohesion and wish to contribute their fair share, both to collective expenditures and to defending the peace.

This is why they are often active in different peace, justice and international solidarity groups, just as they contribute, in diverse ways, to the development of alternative means of conflict resolution, both at home and elsewhere. This also explains why they have been working for over twenty-five years, to get the Canadian government to provide them with a mechanism which would allow them to fully obey the requirements of tax law and the requirements of their conscience.

Could other causes be valid reasons for fiscal conscientious objection? This is certainly possible (after all, we have no monopoly on conscience)! We maintain, however, that it is up to Parliament to consider each claim and to decide, on behalf of all Canadians, which motivations are serious enough to warrant conscientious objector status, as it did in the past for objection to military service.

In the meantime, we refuse complicity with war-making, with its thousands of innocent victims, in Iraq or elsewhere. We will continue to refuse to pay our military taxes. We invite our fellow citizens to join us. And we each assume all the attendant consequences.

#### WHERE WE ARE AND WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Excerpt from: Canada @ Peace: Coactive Security by Dave Hubert

In 1985, I left the employ of the Government of Alberta to develop a refugee settlement agency in Edmonton. Almost all the refugees coming to Canada and the Mennonite Centre for Newcomers were the victims of war. Most were civilians. Many had been tortured. All were traumatised.

I believe it is wrong to take the life of another human being, either by my own hand or by extension, through the government I help elect and finance. Working with refugees, and in helping them deal with their trauma, convinced me of the moral bankruptcy of war. As a result, I directed the portion of my taxes that would otherwise have been allocated to support Canada's military to the Canadian Peace Tax Fund.

I am willing to pay taxes to do good, but not to do harm. I do not wish to be accused of not paying for my fair share of running the country, but I can not in good conscience pay for war making, training for war and killing. When I filed my 1985 tax return I sent a letter to the Minister of National Revenue explaining my actions, and asking that legislation be introduced to guarantee my conscience would not be violated by forcing me to support an activity I find repugnant.

Ten months later Revenue Canada ordered me to pay up or else. Following the example of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, I made an appointment to see Revenue Canada. At 9 AM on the appointed day, I went to the Federal Building in Edmonton. A young woman invited me into a small conference room. No coffee was offered. Even before our discussion started she seemed unsympathetic. I guessed that she was a young mother, with one or two children. When we got into serious discussion and she learned that I was withholding my taxes for reasons of conscience and religious conviction, she

asked, in all seriousness, "Don't you believe in Armageddon?" The question surprised me. I didn't expect such an evangelical query from a public servant.

Armageddon! Ecocide. Nuclear winter. Silent spring. The end of civilisation and return to primordial chaos. All of history's accumulated hate and violence gathered together into a final paroxysm of killing, vaporised in a final fire storm of man-made radiation.

This was 1986. World leaders were discussing mutually assured destruction (MAD). Ronald Reagan believed in Armageddon and even mused that he might be the appointed agent to make it happen. On a microphone inadvertently left on he stated, with a sense of the macabre, that bombing the Russians would start in five minutes. In a speech to the National Association of Evangelicals, he had previously designated Russia "the Evil Empire". The Pentagon considered 42,000,000 Americans to be acceptable collateral damage in the first strike in a protracted, winnable nuclear war. The lapse time from when an ICBM was launched by either the U.S. or the S.U. (Soviet Union) to when it would strike its target was less than 30 minutes. In a nuclear war one million people would die every minute, compared to a million every month in the final phases of WW II. Alberta was a testing ground for cruise missiles. Because of its strategic location as a military base, communications and logistics centre, Edmonton was targeted. The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists had set the doomsday clock at three minutes to midnight. Yes, I believed in Armageddon. It could have happened that very day. But I did not want to pay for it myself.

I thought of my mother's uncle, the one with a perverted sense of humour. When domestic deep freezes became available in the midfifties, he wanted one. So he went to his hen house and made a modest proposal to his chickens. If they would each lay an egg every day, he would earn enough money from the sale of the eggs to purchase the deep freeze. To reward them, he'd let them all sleep in it. The hens were convinced and laid the required number of eggs. My uncle bought the deep freeze and let them all sleep in it.

That's what we humans are asked to do, too. Our politicians tell us all to pay our taxes so the generals can buy all kinds of military hardware that will then be used on us when we disagree with them.

This Revenue Canada official was surprised I had misgivings about this arrangement. She was so committed to her Armageddon scenario that she couldn't seem to grasp the significance of our discussion. Then I thought of her children. I told her that the world's best scientists stated unless humanity changed course, the chances of her children living to

the year 2000 were less than 50-50. Suddenly she understood, and we discussed the issue as two rational human beings with a common problem. Nonetheless, three weeks later I received a garnishee notice, and had to ask my employer if I was to garnishee my own wages.

Freedom of conscience is the first freedom guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, but the Government violates the Charter by refusing my right to freedom of conscience. It forces me to contribute to hate, violence, killing and lawlessness through my taxes.

[A draft copy of the book is available for \$20.00, including postage and handling, from: Dave Hubert, 8107-44 Ave. Edmonton, AB T2M 4K8. Tel 780-462-6234. E-mail: dhubert@telus.net]

**%**%

#### MY CONSCIENCE AT WORK... SUBSCRIBE - RENEW TODAY

Name Address						
Phone:	e-mail:					
There are two	,					
	,	axation (COMT). A COMT is a member who				
1	•	Trust account maintained by CC.				
-As a member.	Membership in Conscience C	Canada is open to any person committed to				
furthering its o	bjectives and who pays an ani	nual membership fee of \$10. This entitles you to				
		1 "				
receive the two	yearly newsletters and to vot	e on all issues at the Annual general Meeting.				
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