"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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Spring 2004 ISSN 1196-9970 Number 86

Welcome to Newsletter #86!

Editorial: Dominique Boisvert, Vice-president of CC

WELCOME! Welcome indeed to you, our readers: CC members or sympathisers, COMTs, and peace lovers. Because together we are the people who will make, day after day, peace a more genuine reality.

We on the CC Board have the privilege and responsibility to keep the torch of Conscientious Objection (CO) alive and shining on our Canadian landscape, constantly buoyed by the encouraging words and the donations we receive. Thank you.

While CO is more concrete when we are faced with forced physical conscription, we know that most wars are now waged by professional armies, composed of "volunteer" soldiers, and by endlessly costlier and deadlier military hardware. And that is why we must ask ourselves: will I accept to let my tax money go and serve in the army or not? Or, as illustrated in Richard Sanders' article on the next page, will I allow my portion of the Canada Pension Plan to buy more killing machinery? That is precisely what COMT (Conscientious Objection to Military Taxation) is all about. On page 5 is this year's guide for withholding the military portion of your taxes.

We are pleased to witness some significant signs of progress in the peace movement. Not only the massive outpouring of popular support against the invasion of Iraq across Canada, and the "official" Canadian government's refusal to join the "Coalition of the Willing", but also a renewed interest in the various parts of the peace movement, the continued presence of Peace Teams in Iraq, and our own undertaking for the upcoming AGM.

As you will see on pages 7-8, we will be holding CC meetings all across Canada during the week of April 19, 2004. This is not only a way of showing and experiencing our common goal, identity and

membership in the CO movement. It is also a way of breaking new ground: moving from an essentially defensive or resistance approach to war and violence, towards a more proactive approach to creating the conditions for peace. Indeed, in this new way of holding our AGM, we want to explore, among ourselves and with a larger public, some of the basic requirements to make peace a more concrete reality. We plan these meetings as open dialogues and workshops, gathering not only "the converted" but also other "people of good will", including people who have made different choices - e.g., people who are or have been in the military.

Our goal is clear: we want to go from "peace would be desirable (if possible)" to "peace is necessary and possible". And more concretely, to explore how we will make it possible, day after day, one step at the time. One of the ways is to enact legislation that recognises the legitimacy of fiscal conscientious objection. The petition to Parliament, also enclosed in this newsletter, is one of the tools we will use with the government after the next elections.

All these are some of the reasons why it is so heartening to welcome you all to this Newsletter!



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Canada Pension Plan: Investing in War

Richard Sanders, co-ordinator, Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade

This article summarizes the recent 52-page report Operation Embedded Complicity: Canada, Playing our Part in the Business of War. To order a copy please send \$5 to COAT, 541 McLeod St., Ottawa, ON K1R 5R2. For more information, call 613-231-3076 or email overcoat@rogers.com

Millions of Canadians are being forced to invest in the shameful business of war. We are entrapped in this complicity through mandatory contributions to the Canada Pension Plan (CPP).

The CPP Investment Board, which manages these investments, is governed by an Act of Parliament. It dictates that profit is the only determining factor to be considered when investing. The CPPIB's "social investment" policy states that it *never* considers *any* social or ethical issues when investing our pension money. Not surprisingly, last year's CPP portfolio included such notoriously unethical corporations as 15 of the world's top 20 weapons manufacturers.

As of September 30, 2003, about \$2.4 billion in CPP funds were invested in military contractors. Of that, almost \$1 billion went to 65 US war industries, with over \$600 million invested in 29 of the Pentagon's top contractors. Some of these corporations produce major conventional weapons systems, while others provide specialised fuel to get these weapons into combat.

Most of the remaining CPP investments (about \$1.36 billion) were funnelled into about 50 Canadian military contractors. Many of these 'Canadian' contractors are actually branch plants of US companies. The majority of Canada's military production is for export, mostly to the U.S. Once there, Canada's high-tech components are assembled into weapons systems.

The Liberals' Feeble Response

In November, Liberal MP David Pratt (now the Liberals' Minister of Defence) responded to questions about CPP investments in military industries by saying: "these defence firms are legitimate corporations as worthy of investment as any other...Recent events have proven that North America needs a military, and people who think otherwise are completely irresponsible" (Nepean This Week, Nov. 21, 2003). This was clearly a facile attempt to create a red herring to deflect attention from potentially embarrassing facts.

Hypocrisy and Landmines

CPP investments in corporations linked to the manufacture of anti-personnel landmines (APMs) contravene the spirit – if not the letter – of the global treaty banning these weapons.

CPP investments include the world's top weapons maker, Lockheed Martin – which currently produces Wind Corrected Munitions Dispensers for CBU-89 'Gator' APMs (devices that help place minefields by adjusting the accuracy of the free-fall cluster bombs dropped from U.S. warplanes), and has produced three other types of APMs. Last year, the CPP invested \$160 million in four other U.S. weapons manufacturers that have produced APMs: General Electric Company, Raytheon, Texas Instruments (through subsidiary Unitrode), and Rockwell (through subsidiary Allen-Bradley).

While the Liberals gained tremendous public admiration (and votes) for promoting the Landmine Treaty, they busily subsidised the production and export of dozens of other deadly weapons systems. Now it turns out the Liberal government has been forcing Canadians to invest in corporations that produced many of the estimated 15 million, illegal APMs now stockpiled for use by the US military.

The peace and security of our retirement years is being purchased at the expense of those who must suffer at the receiving end of weapons systems from which we are forced to profit.

We can only hope that if Canadians knew these facts they would be outraged. Unfortunately, most do not even realise that they have been fiscally conscripted. And Canadians are not likely to learn these facts anytime soon: efforts to draw the issues to the mainstream media's attention have failed.

Canadians are, however, slowly becoming aware of CPP investments in war and can now register their opposition to it, using an online petition at http://coat.openconcept.ca/

Info on Following Petition Insert

The next page is an insert of a petition Conscience Canada has presented to Parliament several times. You may want to start gathering signatures as we prepare an organised lobby effort after a new parliament is elected. For then Minister of Finance Mr. Manley's answer to our latest presentation of this petition, and our response to him, see the CC website, http://www.consciencecanada.ca

REPORT: Annual General Meeting of Nos impôts pour la paix (NIPP)

Marilyn Hébert

Just as I was about to write this report, I was struck by a comment in a Montreal newspaper: "In the final run, unearthing Saddam from his hiding place was perhaps an easier task than that of trying to unearth the truth from under the rubble and the lies surrounding American politics in Iraq and in the Middle East." (free translation¹) And what is the relationship between this statement by Amir Khadir, president of SUCO (the Québec counterpart of CUSO), and the AGM of NIPP? It just so happened that NIPP had coupled its AGM with an invitation to Robert Turcotte, a peace activist and author of *Les mensonges de la guerre en Irak* (*Lies About the War in Iraq*)², to give a public talk about his experiences in Iraq.

To become a member of the Iraq Peace Team, Robert was trained in the use of non-violence in conflict zones by Voices in the Wilderness, an American NGO. Arriving in Baghdad some days prior to the first bombardment, Robert stayed in that city until a few days after the statue of Saddam was toppled to the ground. Why? Because he felt it important to manifest solidarity with Iraqi citizens and to help document events that might eventually lead to charges of war crimes.

What Robert saw and heard during his stay convinced him that "truth is the first victim of war" and that, upon his return to Quebec, he had a responsibility to unearth the truth concerning this war and Canada's participation in it. This is why he accepted to write in three months time a book based on notes from his diary. This is also why he has given numerous conferences to elementary, secondary and university students and to adults. It was such a group who heard him speak on December 10, 2003, the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, at the cooperative coffee house where NIPP was to hold its AGM.

Inevitably, in the question period following his presentation, someone asked: What can we do? Besides suggesting all the options NIPP has to offer as concrete actions, Robert invites those interested to consult his site,

http://www.mensongesdelaguerre.net, where a letter making specific demands on the Canadian government can be used as a model. The letter refers to the budget of the Defence Department, the production and sale of armaments, and the possible Canadian involvement in the US antimissile shield project. It also invites Canada to

become a leader in the development of peace and respect for human rights throughout the world.

Robert's hope for the future lies in a 6-year plan of the Global Non-Violent Peace Force³ to train 15,000 full-time pacifists to which 10,000 reservists could be added should a major crisis arise. Robert invited his audience to join him in imagining what the situation might have been if trained pacifists had been ready to be sent to every town and village throughout Iraq prior to the first attack. The Baghdad neighbourhood where peace team members and journalists stayed was one of the safest areas in the city.

Following Robert's presentation, NIPP held its annual general meeting. In response to Robert's need for suggestions to orient actions, NIPP decided to re-print a number of its documents, including a statement to be signed by a conscientious objector to warfare. The list of those signing such a document will be kept on file by NIPP in a "CO Registry" for future reference should any CO status ever become an issue. For more information you can visit NIPP web site: http://www.cam.org/~nipp

It was also decided that should a member of NIPP choose to go on vacation to Belgium in July and to attend at the same time the Tenth International Conference on War Tax Resistance and Peace Tax Campaigns (see next page), NIPP could contribute to some of the expenses involved.

The evening ended with the feeling that NIPP was recovering from a difficult period and that the collaboration of Robert Turcotte in making known conscientious objection both to war and to military taxation is of major importance.

Notes:

- Original quote: "Peut-être que finalement déterrer Saddam de sa cachette aura été beaucoup plus aisé que ne sera la tâche de déterrer la vérité sous tant de décombres et de mensonges qui jonchent la politique américaine en Irak et en Moyen-Orient." Amir Khadir dans *La Presse*, Montréal, le 15 décembre 2003, A23.
- Written at the request of the publishers, Les Intouchables, in collaboration with Yan Muckle. You can access additional information in French at http://www.mensongesdelaguerre.net
- 3 A civilian force similar to the Blue Berets, but unarmed and trained in non-violent conflict resolution.

Announcements

New CC Peer Support Network

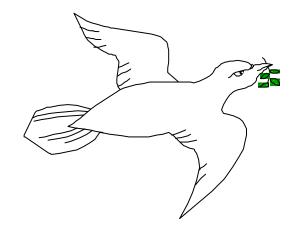
Conscience Canada is putting together a list of organizations and individuals that can provide support and information to COMTs and people considering acting on their conscientious objection to paying taxes for war and the military. This could include peace groups, peace-conscious lawyers, and individual COMTs.

All the persons or groups listed should be able to give basic information on what war tax resistance or conscientious objection to paying military taxes is and reasons to engage in it, as well as information about resources and local activities. We would also like to develop peer support for COMTs to share experiences and discuss strategies with others who are withholding or redirecting the military portion of their taxes.

Our hope is to develop a list similar to the one published by the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee (an American coalition of COMT groups), posted online at http://www.nwtrcc.org/contactN2.htm

As with the NWTRCC list, phone and street addresses will not be given out, and individuals without email, PO Box contacts, or commercial/institutional addresses will not be listed on our website.

If you are willing to be on this list, please contact Conscience Canada at consciencecanada@shaw.ca or 901-70 Mill Street, Toronto, ON M5A 4R1.



New CC Email Discussion List

We are launching an unmoderated email list to allow for informal and wide-ranging discussion of the issues that are important to us towards creating a world that can resolve conflict and face problems in a respectful and non-violent manner.

To subscribe, send a message to consciencecanada-subscribe@yahoogroups.com or go to http://groups.yahoo.com/group/consciencecanada/

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact Conscience Canada at consciencecanada@shaw.ca

We look forward to hearing your comments and perspectives! •

Tenth International Conference on War Tax Resistance and Peace Tax Campaigns: Belgium, July 8-11, 2004

The Tenth International Conference on War Tax Resistance and Peace Tax Campaigns will be held in Brussels, Belgium from Thursday evening July 8 till Sunday noon July 11, 2004.

Although we won't be receiving the detailed program until a later date, we know that past conferences held plenary sessions on such issues as peace tax bills and cases of war tax resisters. Workshops covered a variety of topics, such as military peacekeeping vs. non-violent conflict

intervention, lobbying in national legislatures and facing the risks of war tax resistance. The biennial General Assembly of Conscience and Peace Tax International will also be held during the conference.

Should you be interested in attending, please let us know. If you could help find funding to enable an active member of Conscience Canada and/or a person in a third-world country to attend the conference, your help would be much appreciated.

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). In this way they can 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, 2003 we calculated the proportion of the federal government expenditures used by the Department of National Defence as reflected in the Public Accounts of Canada (2002/2003). On this basis, the expenditure of DND was \$12,427,875,000 – representing 7.93% of the total government expenditures of \$156,784,709,000.

Contrary to previous years, and in accordance with the resolution made at the CC AGM last year,

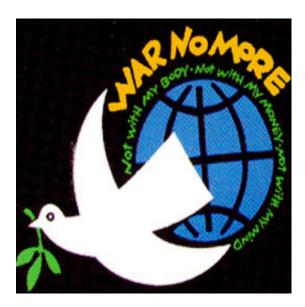
we based our calculation on the actual expenditures of DND. To do a comprehensive calculation, we would need to identify expenditures related to the military in a number of government's departments (e.g. Veterans Affairs, Emergency Preparedness or the military portion of the debt). Even with this very conservative approach, the percentage of the total Canadian expenses going to military pursuits is still 7.93%.

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 in points 4 and 7 below. Or you can support the work and goals of CC by becoming a member (see Subscription form on back of newsletter).

continued on next page →

Redirecting Military Taxes to the Conscience Canada Peace Tax Fund

- 1. Complete your Income Tax Form as usual, down to Balance Due.
- 2. Go back to Net Federal Tax line. Calculate 7.93% 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. Please specify if you want the interest on your deposit kept segregated or if it can be used by CC for its operations.
- 4. Write a letter (see sample letter on next page) to Ralph Goodale, 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 to House of Commons, Ottawa, ON K1A OA6) or via email 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;
 - Peter McKay, Leader of the PC, mckayj@parl.gc.ca;
 - Svend Robinson, MP, robinson.s@parl.gc.ca;
 - your own MP
- **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 the Editor.



Taxes for Peace continued

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 the amount they consider in "arrears."

In the event of collection by CCRA (or at any time upon your request), 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 large amounts (over several hundred dollars) have been seized. Some COMTs have had collection in following years from tax refunds. By now, all COMTs have likely had GST refunds seized.



Sample letter to Minister of Finance

Dear Minister.

Martin Luther King once said: "The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral, begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it....Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars."

I firmly agree with that view. Trying to defend ourselves through war-making is not working. The United Nations recognised 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. Canada's priorities are still skewed in favour of violent as opposed to nonviolent defence and security-building.

Recognising the rights of conscientious objectors would be an important step towards changing our priorities in the right direction.

In order for our Freedom of Conscience to have real meaning, those of us, who cannot, in conscience, contribute to the military, need to be able to direct the military portion of our taxes to non-military means of security-building. The Private Member Bill C-232 Conscientious Objection Act would provide such a choice without in any way interfering with the Government's fiscal powers. Since at present this is not yet the case and 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.

Will you work to bring Bill C-232 to a vote in the House and to establish a Peace Tax Fund for conscientious objectors to military taxation, like myself? Such a tax provision is needed in order for Canada to respect its commitment to guarantee the right to freedom of conscience laid out in our Charter.

Sincerely,

(your signature and address)

OFFICIAL NOTICE: Conscience Canada Annual General Meeting (AGM) April 21, 2004, 6:00-7:30 PM, 2174 Danforth Avenue, Toronto followed by open meeting for dialogue & discussion

This year Conscience Canada (CC) has a special structure for the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The business portion of the AGM will be held in Toronto from 6:00-7:30 PM, and will be followed by public dialogues in Toronto and other communities across Canada.

Part 1: Business Portion of the AGM 6:00 PM, Wednesday, April 21, 2004
Danforth Mennonite Church, 2174 Danforth Ave.,
Toronto (1½ block east of Woodbine subway stn.)

The agenda for the business portion of AGM is:

- 1) Approval of the Minutes of the AGM (available upon request)
- 2) Review of the work done by Conscience Canada during the year
- 3) Election or confirmation of board members*
- 4) Presentation and Acceptance of the financial statements for 2003 (available upon request)
- 5) Appointment of auditors for 2004
- 6) Other business
 - * 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: Dominique Boisvert, Joshua Mira Goldberg, Bruna Nota, Jan Slakov, Heather Sturrock, Don Woodside. Standing for election: Marilyn Hébert.

The present AGM notice, included in the newsletter and sent to all the members' addresses we have on record, is to be the official notice, as required by the by-laws. Let us know if you want to receive a copy of the by-laws electronically or by mail. If you cannot attend the Toronto business meeting in person, please send your vote by proxy using the form on the next page.

Part 2: Cross-Canada Dialogue: Exploring non-military defence and security for Canada

The public dialogue meeting constitutes the wider and more stimulating part of this year's AGM and will occur right across the country. It will engage COMTs and all Canadians who think that we must stop equating defence with the military, with violence and war.

We will open a dialogue addressing questions such as:

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

It is not that we know how to have a world without wars; but that we believe that such a world is *necessary* and *possible*, and that we want to *look* for "how to" with the help of others.

We have designated the week of April 19 for these exchanges to occur, to give all of us a sense of unity. On the next page is the list of the cities in which we know at present that something is being organised, and the contacts for the local organisers. Please join in, check with us if new organisers have emerged since this newsletter went to print, or organise a group discussion yourself. It can be a discussion among friends around the kitchen table, a potluck affair or a large public discussion in an auditorium. We will provide guidelines and support to all organisers.

In the fall newsletter, we will publish an overview on these meetings and the way ahead that they will have indicated for Conscience Canada and for each one of us. Please appoint a note-taker and send in your report as soon as the meeting is over while things are fresh in your mind.

continued on next page →

Conscience Canada Cross-Country Peace Dialogues: April 19-24, 2004

Get in touch with the following contact people to volunteer your help, or to find out the venue, date and time of the meeting in your city. We will also post updates on the CC web site (http://www.consciencecanada.ca) as the details takes shape.

- Charlottetown (PEI): Daphne Davey, 902-675-3501, ddavey@isn.net
- Moncton (NB): Huberte Gautreau, 506-382-5911, gauthube@nb.sympatico.ca
- Halifax (NS): Daniel Haran, 902-454-6870, ah813@chebucto.ns.ca
- Montréal (PQ): Dominique Boisvert, 514-376-8047, domfeldi@internet.uqam.ca; Marilyn Hebert, 450-438-1635, hebert.hetu@sympatico.ca
- Kitchener (ON): Rick Bauman (Mennonite Central Committee-Ontario), 519-745-8458, rickcb@mennonitecc.on.ca
- Ottawa (ON), Christine DiZazzo, 613-989-2804, christine_dizazzo@ocdsb.edu.on.ca
- Peterborough (ON): 7:30 PM, April 23, Peterborough Public Library; Joyce Barrett (Kawartha Ploughshares), 705-743-0241, joyce.john@sympatico.ca
- **Toronto (ON):** 7:30 PM, April 21, Mennonite Church, 2174 Danforth Ave.; Tim Schmucker (MCC-Ontario), 416-423-9229, tims@mennonitecc.on.ca; Christian Peacemaker Teams
- Hamilton (ON): 7:30 PM, April 21, Quaker Meeting House, 7 Butty Place; Murray Lumley, 905-648-1507, mlumlev@hwcn.org
- Winnipeg (MB), Tym Elias, 204-783-1721, hsmcpastor@sympatico.ca; Cec Muldrew, 204-255-0588, cmuldrew@mts.net
- Saskatoon (SK): Eileen Klassen Hamm, 306-665-2555, eklassenhamm@mccs.org
- Edmonton (AB): Dave Hubert, 780-462-6234, dehubert@telus.net
- Victoria (BC): Joan Russow, 250-598-0071, j.russow@shawlink.ca
- Saltspring Island (BC): Jan Slakov, 250-537-5251, js@saltspring.com



MY CONSCIENCE AT WORK... SUBSCRIBE - RENEW TODAY

| INAMIC. | _ |
|---|--|
| Address: | I, (please print), a member in good standing of Conscience |
| Phone: | Canada, do hereby grant my proxy vote for the April 21, 2004 Annual General Meeting of Conscience Canada to: |
| Email: | (please print) or, in their absence, to any director |
| There are two ways to join: | of Conscience Canada. |
| Conscientious Objectors to Military Taxation (COMT): M Tax Trust account maintained by CC. | lember who has deposited funds into the Peace |
| Member: Open to any person committed to furthering Co- annual membership fee of \$10. This entitles you to rece the Annual General Meeting. (Please note: We intend to earlier system.) | ive CC's newsletters and to vote on all issues at |
| Annual membership: (\$10.00/yr): \$ | |

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

Address Correction Requested

total funds enclosed

(cheque payable to Conscience Canada)

Peace Tax Trust Deposit (full or symbolic):

Proxy Vote for 2004 AGM