

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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Post Lobby Trip

Editorial by Bruna Nota

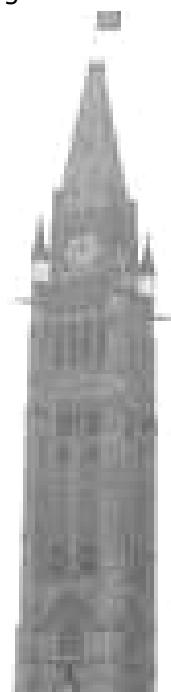
From February 20 to 25 five Conscience Canada (CC) board members (Dominique, Don, Jan, Marilyn and myself) along with Louise Dixon, Murray Lumley and Murray Thomson, met in Ottawa to lobby federal politicians for peace tax legislation and to discuss the long-term vision for Conscience Canada.¹

Each day of that lobby week, we went through the parliamentary security check so, by the end of the week, we were on friendly terms with the guards and other personnel who greeted us. One was curious what we were there for. I said that we were meeting MPs, Senators and civil servants to work towards passing a law to allow conscientious objectors to contribute to non-violent alternatives for resolving conflicts. His face lit up with a surprised smile as he responded: "That is certainly a very good idea. I was in the army for three years and got plenty of training on how to handle weapons and respond to aggression. You can take a man out of the army but you can't take the army out of the man. I've been out for a few years now and I wish I had got some re-training, and particularly on how to respond to conflicts or provocation in a constructive, non-violent way. That would help me with my kids and generally in my life, but I do not have any of those skills. Keep up the good

work, and good luck." His response fed into our thinking.

The lobby week was made possible by generous support from many people, including MP Jean Crowder, who allowed us to use a meeting room next to her office as 'home base'. It was there we met to prepare for our lobbying efforts and deal with a variety of CC business. One particularly cathartic moment was when Don and Dominique, "fresh" from having woken up at 3:30 AM with a need to rethink our approach, shared their insights.

Their reflections led us to think about what it means to be a conscientious objector (CO). There are different levels of refusal of violence as well as rationales for this refusal; for some it is a refusal to engage in any kind of violence, while others want to be able to contribute to peacekeeping efforts, even when peace officers are armed, as long as certain conditions are met. Some are COs for religious, others for secular reasons. For some, like Gandhi, there is a commitment and belief in the power of a 'truth force' or 'love force' to resolve disputes, even when the dispute has become violent while others advocate a more utilitarian nonviolence, choosing nonviolence because it works. As individuals we recognize an evolution in our own thinking and we think it is important to recognize the validity of all these types of conscientious objection.



¹ Many thanks to the groups and individuals whose contributions made it possible for us to go to Ottawa and to continue publishing the newsletter. Contributors include the CFSC (Canadian Friends Service Committee), NIPP (Nos impôts pour la paix), the Peace, Justice & Social Concerns Commission of the Mennonite Church, Eastern Canada, the Hamilton Monthly Meeting (Friends) and many of our members.

Yes, CC's special calling in the kaleidoscope of the peace and justice movement, is to bring attention to the connection between paying taxes and war. During one of the meetings when Joshua joined us by phone, he mentioned how Conscience Canada helps people see ways for them to opt out of "the machine". Indeed, we must recognize our responsibility if we fail to prevent "the machine" from doing terrible harm. The reality of life in Canada is that we all participate in injustice every day despite our best intentions, but redirecting our taxes away from war is a tangible way that we can both recognize our complicity and withdraw a piece of our support. Our generous hostess in Ottawa, Diane McIntyre, summed it up: We do not want our bodies, our taxes, our resources, our environment, to be used for war. We believe war and war preparations must come to an end and in the meantime we will work to see that our small share of 'defence' taxes be spent on nonviolent security.

Working actively with the whole of the peace movement to develop alternative nonviolent ways for peace and conflict resolution is the other facet of our engagement. We do not only say 'No to war', we say 'Yes to exploring and funding alternatives'. A number of the officials we met offered a great deal of support for this position and we were encouraged to modify the CO bill to include a recommendation for alternative spending (not just redirecting military taxes into general revenue).

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find information about the changes we propose to bring to the CO Bill, examples from other countries of how nonviolent peace-building is being incorporated into their policies, as well as a brief history of conscientious objection in Canada.

We welcome your feedback: how can we best reflect the diversity of the CO movement? In what ways can CC be most effective in making conscientious objection relevant to our times? Perhaps you would like to help with outreach, our upcoming membership survey, future mail-outs, etc. ... In the meantime, thank you so much for your support, be it

sharing newsletters, writing letters, prayers, everything.

Revising the Conscientious Objection Bill

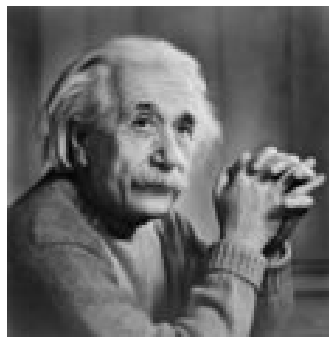
by Dominique Boisvert

Over the years, several MPs have presented Conscientious Objector Tax bills to the House. The most recent (C-232) was presented in 2001.

That bill, in response to recommendations made by government officials at the time, had no provision for how peace tax monies should be spent, other than to ensure that they not be spent on the military.

During our February, 2005 lobby effort, several MPs indicated that it would be better to offer positive alternatives to military spending and have invited us to revise the bill to reflect this before it is reintroduced in the House

The new CO bill would thus include a provision to clearly recommend that Conscientious Objectors' taxes be spent on nonviolent security-building measures, such as support for research on peaceful alternatives and "in the field" initiatives like the Nonviolent Peace Service, for example.



*"The pioneers of a warless world are the young men who refuse military service." **Albert Einstein** (from the book **Peacemaking** by Conrad G. Brunk)*

A Book Directly Connected to Our Stomping Grounds

by Marilyn Hébert

If you are a member or supporter of Conscience Canada, you read French, and you enjoy discovering deeper meaning to words like "conscience", terms like "conscientious objection" and "civil disobedience", then go for this book. This challenging essay shows how those who exercise freedom of conscience - irrespective of their belief or non-belief - make important contributions to the "real ethical progress" for this world of ours.

Should you buy or borrow Guy Durand's book, you need not worry about losing your way in an intellectual labyrinth because what you will discover is the concrete meaning and the importance of conscientious objection and its ramifications in freedom of conscience and civil disobedience.

While readers may be aware that "radical freedom of conscience is a conquest of modern times", they may be less aware of the impact its diverse forms and modalities over the centuries have had on contemporary thought and practice of conscientious objection (Chapitre 1, Repères historiques). In its juridical context, the expression conscientious objection extends far beyond that of military service, even if the history of conscientious objection to military service in Canada goes back to 1793. (Chapitre 2, Contexte juridique). The author goes on to explore the meaning behind and the relationship between terms and words like civil disobedience, conscientious objection, non-cooperation and non-violence (Chapitre 3, Éléments de définitions.) Since, as the author points out, conscientious objection is the expression of freedom of conscience, one needs to reflect on how conscience is formed, how it fits into the complementary functions of ethics and the conditions that may lead one in conscience to contest, to denounce, to disobey (Chapitre 4, Perspective éthique). Finally, the author provides examples of cases of conscientious objection

that respect both freedom of conscience and the common good. (Chapitre 5, Analyse de cas d'objection de conscience).

A controversial issue for some readers might be the application of three characteristics specific to conscientious objection, namely that of being public, non-violent and consequent (referring to the acceptance of eventual sanctions), to soldiers from the USA seeking asylum in Canada. In order to be qualified juridically as an act of conscientious objection, a refusal to serve in the military must include these three dimensions. Under ordinary circumstances, this means that a soldier who is personally and deeply convinced that the war in Iraq is illegal must publicly and non-violently refuse to be sent to Iraq and must accept the consequences, which in the USA means imprisonment, impossibility of pursuing a university education and the likelihood of difficulty finding jobs of his or her choosing. Should that soldier flee to Canada and request asylum here, his action may lack the elements of "public" and "consequent". Hopefully his or her lawyer would argue that the lack of proportionality between the act and its consequences are to be taken into account in this case and that therefore, the person in question should be considered a conscientious objector. As Mr Durand remarks, "Conscience takes precedence over law."

This book helped me reflect on the seriousness of conscientious objection - which in Conscience Canada refers specifically to military taxation. It also reminded me of the need to live out one's principles in positive terms. In other words, this is not simply a question of being anti-war, anti-violence and anti-military service but of a commitment to peace and to promoting peace efforts. As the author comments, "Denouncing is less important than positive alternative measures." In this way, "objection takes on prophetic or symbolic meaning" and the objector (alone or in a group) becomes a witness in our society to an alert conscience."

We can conclude that members of Conscience Canada, along with their sister and brother-members of Nos impôts pour la paix, will surely find this essay of interest.

Pour une éthique de la dissidence: Liberté de conscience, objection de conscience et désobéissance civile, Guy Durand (Éditions Liber) 150 pages (\$18.00 Cdn)

White Poppies for Peace

Do you know about the peace poppy tradition for Remembrance Day? Back in 1933, members of the Women's co-operative Guild in England decided to wear white poppies to symbolize their total rejection of war. The Peace Pledge Union <www.whitepoppy.org> has plenty of educational materials on line to accompany the campaign and various groups in Canada have worked to promote the idea as well. For instance, last year members of the Toronto Monthly Meeting (Society of Friends) decided to start organising in September or October to adopt, wear and promote the white poppy as a symbol of their choice to remember war and violence in ways that emphasize the 'never again' concept.

In Canada there is no source for manufactured white poppies so home-made white poppies "sprout forth" in many forms, diverse and varied as are all things home-made. You can make your own, using whatever is available to you, from store-bought lining material to recycled boxboard. For a sample poppy and more information, please contact Jan Slakov at <js@saltspring.com>/(250) 537-5251.

Why white poppies? A quote from Len Desroches' book, **Love of Enemy**, directs us towards part of an answer to that question: "For too many people, reconciliation may be the morally proper thing to aim for, but it is not exciting. The BOOM and BANG of violence titillates and intoxicates.... Part of the problem is that, in a culture that props up this myth of victory-as-excitement, we hear too few of the powerful stories of reconciliation." Perhaps in future issues of our newsletter, we can publish some of those wonderful stories. In the meantime though, you can find one from Len's book on our website www.consciencecanada.ca or e-mail us for other examples.

A Brief History of Conscientious Objection in Canada

by Don Woodside

April 2005

Canada has respected conscientious objection (CO) for more than two centuries. In 1793 in Upper Canada, Governor Lord Simcoe offered Mennonites, Quakers and Brethren in Christ an exemption from militia duty, to encourage their immigration to Canada. They were however expected to pay a fee so that others could serve in their place. During the war of 1812, some Quakers were jailed for refusing to pay this tax. In 1841, after years of lobbying, the government agreed to use this tax for public works. In 1849, the tax was eliminated. Between 1873 and 1899 exemptions from military service were granted to Mennonites, Doukhobors and Hutterites to encourage them to immigrate to Canada. During WWI some members of these 'historic peace churches' had an automatic exemption, while others did not. Some were required to do non-combatant duty in the military, and some refused and were imprisoned. Conscientious objectors (COs) were disenfranchised. Mennonites objected to buying war bonds and lobbied successfully to have special non-interest bearing bonds made available to pay for relief work only. During WW II the grounds for CO status were initially restricted to religious groups which prohibited participation in war, but as a result of considerable pressure were gradually broadened, until by 1942 any conscientious objection, religious or secular, was acceptable. Alternative service was offered, and it was important to COs that it was under civilian not military control. Again special bonds were offered which would be used for civilian relief only. By 1945 there were about 10,000 COs.

Since 1978, the focus has shifted to war tax resistance, as we are in an era in which citizens' taxes, rather than their bodies, are conscripted. In 1981, a letter from constitutional expert Senator Eugene Forsey, MP Stanley Knowles, and 5 other MPs, was widely published. The letter said, in part: "In

times of military conscription, exemption from service in the military can be claimed on grounds of conscience, and alternate service is approved. It should be equally possible to claim exemption from paying for war preparation, and an alternative provided." The Quebec Charter of Rights in 1975 and the Canadian Constitution in 1982 enshrined freedom of conscience based on secular morality as well as religion. Conscience Canada was incorporated in 1983 as a secular organization, and supported a legal test case against the compulsory payment of taxes for military purposes. The case was rejected, the rationale being that under the Income Tax Act there was no nexus between a taxpayer and the use of taxes; in 1990 the Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal. Former Jus-

There is currently no legal recognition of CO status in Canada. Military personnel who become COs have no legal means to obtain discharge or non-combatant status.

CC LOBBY EFFORT – at a glance

Conscience Canada, along with Nos impôts pour la paix (NIPP) which is the Quebec French-speaking counterpart, spent the whole budget week in Ottawa (Feb. 21-25 2005), meeting with some 25 MPs from all parties, ministers, senators and a few senior civil servants.

Farley Mowat, now a naturalist and writer, and once the young Canadian soldier pictured here who participated in the carnage of the Second World War, writes as follows in his book **And No Birds Sang!**, McClelland et al, Toronto, 1979, p. 195-196: "Let it be said then that I wrote this book in the absolute conviction that there never has been, nor ever can be a 'good' or worthwhile war. So awful that through three decades I kept the deeper agonies of it wrapped in the cotton-wool protective forgetfulness. ...but could not, because the Old Lie*-temporarily discredited by the Vietnam debacle--is once more gaining credence; a whisper which soon may become another strident shout urging us on to mayhem."

**Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori!* (It is sweet and seemly to die for one's country.)



tice Thomas Berger, lawyer for the war tax refuser, held that the Income Tax Act was in violation of the constitution, and to this date this issue has been avoided.

In 1983 the first Private Member's Motion calling for a National Peace Tax Fund was introduced into the House of Commons. Other Motions and Bills followed in 1984, '86, '88, '92, '97, '99, and 2001. Great efforts have been made to make the bill compatible with parliamentary principles. Many fiscal COs currently deposit the military part of their federal taxes in the Peace Tax Trust Fund operated by Conscience Canada, and usually are subject to collection from their accounts or garnishment of income.

Our follow-up report provides details about the response we received, under the following topics:

1. OBSTACLES / CONTENTIONS / RESERVATIONS
2. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT / ADVICE
3. SUPPORT OFFERED
4. CONNECTIONS/LINKS

Most of the concerns expressed are ones familiar to CC, such as the floodgate argument or the small number of COs (numbers not justifying special attention). There was keen interest to know whether other countries had enacted similar legislation, how to use non-

violence to prevent or respond to a genocide such as what occurred in Rwanda, etc.

We were encouraged to word the bill in positive terms, giving a recommendation as to how the taxes of conscientious objectors could be redirected towards non-violent security-building measures. One suggestion we have yet to follow up on was that we ask the Senate Banking Committee (dealing with tax exemptions for charities) and the Parliamentary Finance Committee to do a study on the peace tax issue.

It's encouraging that members from all four parties we met with were, to varying degrees, supportive of full recognition for conscientious objectors. We hope, in particular, to follow up on suggestions that we meet with the caucus of the Bloc québécois, the Parliamentary Finance Committee, the Women's Caucus and the Southwestern Ontario Caucus of Liberal MPs. Members of the Bloc and the NDP expressed an interest in working together to promote the CO bill. A Liberal and a Conservative MP have also indicated that they might be willing to co-sponsor the bill.

We prepared an information packet, in English and French, to offer to all the officials we contacted. We will make a copy of the kit available on the CC website. If you need one before that happens please contact us.

WORLDWIDE PEACE TAX CAMPAIGNS

by Marilyn Hébert

18 May 2005

As is evident from the information provided below, peace tax advocacy and war tax resistance are international in their scope.

Sources: The website of the umbrella group, Conscience and Peace Tax International (http://cpti.ws/text/t_cpti.html), Country Reports in the REPORT of the Tenth International Conference on War Tax Resistance and Peace

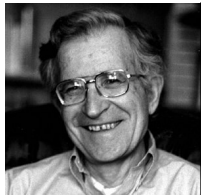
Tax Campaigns held in Brussels, Belgium in July 2004 and other websites listed below.

- Belgium: Flemish Peace Tax Campaign (<http://surf.to/VRAK>) A peace tax bill was introduced in the House of the Belgian federal parliament on March 16, 2005 by all the MPs of SPIRIT (Flemish liberal nationalist) and only by them. However, the MPs of the francophone Green party ECOLO, who earlier had introduced the bill from the previous legislative session (in 2002) will join this new bill when it comes to a discussion in the Commission of the House on finances. For the French version of this bill see: <http://www.lachambre.be/FLWB/pdf/51/1671/51K1671001.pdf>
- Germany: Netzwerk Friedenssteuer e.V. (<http://www.netzwerk-friedenssteuer.de>) This registered society (no longer simply a network) hopes to submit a draft bill to the German Parliament. This bill, called the *Civilian Tax Law*, would set up a separate fund from the *German Military Fund*. This latter would finance all expenses concerning the military and armaments. The bill calls for the right for all persons subject to income or payroll tax to have their income and/or payroll tax directed 100% to the non-military fund.
- Italy: Campagna di Obiezione alle Spese Militari (COSM-DPN) (<http://ospiti.peacelink.it/cnosm/>). Nonpayment of tax is not a legal offence in some countries, such as France and Italy. Italy is a unique example. A number of cases were brought to court not only for refusal to pay war taxes, but also for inciting others not to pay. Remarkably these cases were all acquitted. As a result, the Italian House of Commons passed a resolution (not a law) which calls for some government accommodation for those who in conscience cannot pay the military portion of their taxes. Italians are now allowed to pay the military portion of their taxes to one of four Italian non-governmental organizations that actively work for peace. Italian peace tax advocates pursue meetings with political leaders to request a law allowing them to give

all of their income taxes directly to the National Bureau for Civil Service (UNSC) and Non-Violent Popular Defence (DPN).

- The United Kingdom: Conscience – The Peace Tax Campaign of CONSCIENCE (<http://www.conscienceonline.org.uk>) works in collaboration with the Peace Tax Seven (<http://www.peacetaxseven.com>), seven conscientious objectors who have withheld tax because it contributes to military spending, and are seeking a judicial review of tax laws so that they will no longer be forced to choose between obeying their conscience or the law.
- USA: National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund (NCPTF) (<http://www.peacetaxfund.org>) and National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee (NWTRCC) (<http://www.nwtrcc.org>). NCPTF and NWTRCC are working toward a bill to establish an account in the Treasury of the US known as the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Act. This fund would be for the deposit of income, gift, and estate taxes paid by or on behalf of taxpayers designated as conscientious objectors and would be allocated annually for non-military purposes. The definition of "designated conscientious objector" is "a taxpayer opposed to participation in war in any form based upon the taxpayer's deeply held moral, ethical or religious belief or training". Representative John Lewis (D-GA) is presently seeking as many co-sponsors as possible to the bill before officially introducing it in the House of Representatives of the 109th Congress.

"When Serbia was being bombed my email was full of Serbian human rights organizations saying why on earth is the West doing this, when they didn't give us so much as a photocopier to help our resistance to Milosevic." - **Scilla Elworthy**, former Director of Oxford Research Group



The only place a very powerful nation can be stopped is from within. - **Noam Chomsky**

EXPANDING OUR TOOLBOX: Nonviolence in the real world

Deanna Douglas, who works in administration at the University of Alberta and is on the board of their Peace Program Development Committee, wrote two articles for Conscience Update, the newsletter of the U.K. peace tax organization, Conscience:

www.conscienceonline.org.uk. The articles were designed to help people who know they oppose war answer the perennial thorny question: So, if you wouldn't send in the troops, how would you stop a tyrant?

We are reprinting below almost all of the second of the two articles. It illustrates how a country such as the U.K. could "expand its toolbox" to include nonviolent methods for intervening in Zimbabwe, a country whose government threatens the life and well-being of many of its citizens.

Security - concrete alternatives

Diversity - A positive force

The various methods used to avoid violent conflict are complex and are normally most effective when used in combination. That means that there are no simple, quick fixes, but there is real potential for input from different groups and individuals with very diverse voices.

Many people in the UK are aware of the terrible events that have plagued Zimbabwe over the last few years as Robert Mugabe's government has completely deteriorated and

people have suffered in countless ways (largely at the hands of the ruling ZANU-PF). Last summer, I spent some time in Zimbabwe and learned many things during my stay there - including the inadvisability of a military attack to deal with the problems.

A Toolbox for Change

Traditionally, we have viewed violent conflict as something to be addressed using one primary tool (the armed forces - a hammer of sorts - applied directly or, more commonly, through the threat of its use) as well as a few others kept close at hand (diplomatic efforts, etc). If, however, our society and our government could begin to see the mechanisms to address violence as a fully equipped toolbox, the potential for real (and nonviolent) change increases significantly.

It is obviously more difficult to get a clear picture in our minds of a project that uses varied objects in a large toolbox than a job that uses a hammer and a screwdriver. To that end, I will briefly apply each of the tools below to the current reality in Zimbabwe - one of many global trouble spots. It is not meant to represent a comprehensive list of the alternatives, but to provide a better understanding of the concept.

A Toolkit for Zimbabwe

1. Civilian Protection

Trained units of civilian volunteers are mobilized to areas where there is significant tension, an idea that is growing in popularity throughout the world. This would serve to make Mugabe aware that the eyes of the world are on him and his administration.

2. Control of Arms and Weapons Control

The UK is one of the world's biggest arms exporters (& Canada is among the top 12), including to the developing world. Lower sales and greater control would result in less weapons getting into the hands of existing and potential combatants. If the Zimbabwean army had limited access to everything from torture instruments to planes, there would be a reduced potential for violence. Similarly, if the former military members

who commit many of Zimbabwe's political crimes had sufficient incentives to hand in their weapons, lives would be saved.

3. Trained Inspectors

Inspectors are deployed to look for torture, rape, killing, and ethnic cleansing - and report back to the government (or governing body) that commissioned them. Sadly, this would be particularly useful in Zimbabwe as reports of rape, torture, and disappearances are numerous but largely ignored by Western media.

4. Law Enforcement

As demonstrated in the UK involvement in Sierra Leone, a properly trained and supported law enforcement and judicial system can make an enormous difference. In Zimbabwe there is currently no accountability for any political crime, allowing the ZANU-PF militias to act with impunity.

5. Bringing Warlords and Militias Under Control

NGOs, diplomats, properly supported local leaders, and in some cases the armed forces have been effective in bringing such parties to the negotiating table. In Zimbabwe, the primary militias (including the infamous youth gangs) are arms of the ZANU-PF, so discussions must begin there.

6. Back Channel Diplomacy

Back Channel (otherwise known as Track II) diplomacy is the process whereby individuals or NGOs work behind the scenes when traditional, public diplomacy isn't working. In Zimbabwe, the government will not admit to its role in the violence and economic problems, thereby severely limiting efforts to address them. An unofficial dialogue could open the door.

7. Mediation Training

It is important that local people serve as bridge builders between official and unofficial stakeholders. However, in many cases they do not have skills necessary for this challenging task. In Zimbabwe, a great deal can be learned from their neighbors in South Africa - but funding is necessary.

8. Reconciliation Committees

There have been a number of these through-

out the world in recent years, including in South America, and famously in South Africa. Once again, with sufficient funding, African training would clearly be available to the victims - and the perpetrators - of violence in Zimbabwe.

9. Support for Civil Society and its Opposition to the Government

In countries where the problem is, at least to some extent, the government itself, support of civil society organizations and other voices of opposition are key to change. In Zimbabwe, there is a broad diversity of groups that has been victimized for such small acts as feeding people in towns that voted against the government in the last election.

10. A Free Press

Even though we are aware of such problems in this country as the under-funding of the BBC and the existence of media conglomerates, there are alternatives, even if some of them require access to the internet (which is an option for most in the UK). In Zimbabwe, however, the simple act of buying a non-government endorsed newspaper has resulted in severe beatings and the suspicion of militias loyal to Mugabe.

Editor's note: It's exciting to think of how much more effective our efforts to promote peace and justice could be if our countries were to seriously expand their toolbox and redirect resources from the military to options such as those listed above. In the meantime, thanks in part to globalization, it has become increasingly possible for citizens from one part of the globe to connect with and care about people somewhere else. In the case of Zimbabwe, there is, for instance, the Wall for Social Consciousness project which raises funds for AIDS orphans (<http://www.eppardvision.org/awfsc>). Its founder, Johnny Fernandes (himself a native of Zimbabwe) speaks of this aspect of globalization: "No matter how geography divides us, we are all inextricably linked - linked by our common desire for peace and happiness... We as individuals, can make a difference."

Newsy Bits

The Aug. 2005 issue of the New Internationalist focuses on "The Challenge to Violence". We are pleased to see that CC is one of the resources listed.

In June the names of the 1000 women from around the world who have collectively been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize were made public. Muriel Duckworth, a most active pacifist and long time member of CC was one of the Canadians named.

The UN has declared Sept. 21 the International Day of Peace, with is a call for a worldwide ceasefire and public observances for peace. More information is available at these websites:

<http://www.un.org/events/peaceday/2005/>

<http://www.worldpeace.org/peaceday.html>

Conscience Canada AGM

February 24, 2005 Ottawa

This AGM was special for several reasons. Most of the board was able to be present in person, rather than by proxy, as those of us who were able to, had travelled to Ottawa to participate in the lobbying effort. Alexa McDonough, the NDP's Foreign Affairs critic, accepted our petitions supporting Peace Tax legislation (over 700 signatures) and will present them to the House when it is in session. She shared her happiness on learning, earlier that day, that Paul Martin had finally announced that Canada would not formally participate in the BMD (ballistic missile "defence") program and the audience thanked her for her work to make known the dangers of this destabilizing and wasteful initiative.² Eventually, we hope to work with Alexa to revise the Peace Tax Bill so that she can present it to Parliament as a Private Member's Bill.

² Note: The latest (and highly recommended) issue of **Press for Conversion** documents Canada's duplicity on the BMD question. We SAY we oppose the weaponization of space, but many Canadian companies (which receive public support) are involved in BMD.

Following formalities such as confirming the election of the board and a year end report, we broke our circle to enjoy the exceptionally delicious and healthy refreshments displayed on the back table. Diane MacIntyre, who hosted several of us in her home, was able to provide the refreshments with a tiny budget, thanks to several generous donations and her own work, for she prepared many of the goodies herself. (See the sample recipe accompanying this article.)

Later the circle re-convened for informal introductions from the diverse and interesting people who were in attendance. We learned of a variety of initiatives for a better, more peaceful world, such as the Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (CNANW), the Christian Peacemaker Teams; the youth-based sustainability movement, Otesha; UFER (Union des femmes pour l'égalité entre les races); etc. and Bernard Menard, a faculty member from the Conflict Resolution Dept. of St. Paul University, gave each person present a copy of his book, And What If Love Were the Strongest... /Et si l'amour était le plus fort?

As usual, copies of supporting material, such as our financial statement, the minutes of the meeting and the board report are available on request.

A TASTE OF THE CC AGM

Phyllis's Veggie Paté

from Joan Fulthorp Jubb

1 cup Sunflower seed – grind 80% flour in a coffee grinder
½ cup Nutritional yeast (e.g. engevita)
½ cup Brown rice flour or bean flour
½ tsp sea salt
2 tsp seasoning (I use 1 tsp cumin and 1 tsp basil – curry powder, thyme, parsley are some other choices)
1 cup grated potatoes (I use ½ regular, ½ sweet)
1 cup onion blend w/ 1/3 cup olive oil & ¼ cup lemon juice
1 cup hot water (not quite boiling)

In a large bowl add the dry ingredients & stir. Add potatoes, onion & mix. Add the hot water & blend thoroughly. Flatten in a 9x5 loaf pan or 8x8 pan. Bake in a 350° oven for 45-60 min. Doubles well; freezes well.

Can be a dip: thin with water & soy sauce mixture. Great meat substitute, serve with onion gravy.

For other great recipes please contact us.

UPCOMING MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

We are planning a telephone survey this fall of all previous depositors in the Peace Tax Fund, and everyone on the membership and subscription lists of Conscience Canada and Nos impôts pour la paix. We would like to know how many supporters we have, how many are committed COs, and if they are able and willing to participate in our work. We will ask if they need more information, if they would like to join a local support group, and if they would help us by:

- taking on specific, time-limited tasks
- contacting their MP
- donating money or fund raising
- lobbying other organizations of which they are a member to support Conscience Canada

If you could assist us in doing the survey, please call Conscience Canada at 416 203.1402 or send us an email. We will provide a script and refund any phone bills.

LETTERS TO CC

Many thanks to those of you who send us letters, be they letters of support, copies of correspondence with elected officials or questions and concerns. We would like to reply to each one individually but we can't always find time for that so please know we appreciate your writing. A tip: It is actually easier for us to reply to e-mails, so if you would like a reply and have access to e-mail, that's the most practical choice.

Introducing New CC supporters

Huberte Gautreau, of Moncton, NB, has been a member of CC for many years but this is her first year as a board member, and she has accepted to be the treasurer. We are very grateful not only that she would take on this task, but also that she will help us continue to work bilingually.

Huberte is trained in the public health field and her interests and abilities have led her to several postings to Africa and Peru to help provide basic necessities in the majority world. She is currently active with the Coalition for Pay Equity, a project adopted during her presidency of the Women's March - NB committee, especially in working towards one of its goals - pay equity. She is also the spokesperson for a local peace group, Citoyens pour la paix / Concerned Citizens for Peace .

Louise Dixon has been doing the bookkeeping for Conscience Canada since 2004 and she was able to help with the recent Ottawa lobbying trip and AGM as well. She writes: "I discovered Conscience Canada a year ago through Len Desroches, a long time peace activist, who lives at the housing co-operative [in Toronto] where I work as a book-keeper. I've worked for several housing co-operatives over the last twenty years or so. I'm also interested in community gardening, as I love to grow plants. I participate in several gardens, I'm the chairperson of the Ashbridge Community garden and also help out at the Fairmount Community garden. Currently I'm part of a group planning to plant new trees in a local park and ravine system."

Thanks, Louise, for nurturing us along with the many plants you care for!

Bill Bell: Joshua Mira Goldberg has done a wonderful job providing CC with a free website and formatting our newsletters, etc but needed a break*... and found Bill Bell, of Selkirk, Ontario, who offered to help. Bill was one of the participants in the CC dialogues of 2004 (on nonviolent security alternatives for Canada). It's great to have another skilled, insightful person to work with. Bill's background is in the computer field and now he's making the transition to a new career in employment counselling, which he's sure he'll enjoy. His active interest in human rights and antiwar activities was reawakened at about the time of the invasion of Iraq.

*Our thanks to Joshua for all this work, and for accepting to continue to be part of the Board - with a special interest in outreach.



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There are two ways to join:

- *Conscientious Objectors to Military Taxation (COMT):* Member who has deposited funds into the Peace Tax Trust account maintained by CC.
- *Member:* Open to any person who supports Conscience Canada's objectives and who pays an annual membership fee of \$10. This entitles you to receive CC's newsletters and to vote on all issues at the Annual General Meeting. (Please note: We honour all "life memberships" from an earlier system.)

Annual membership: (\$10.00/yr):	\$	
Donations to Conscience Canada:	\$	
Peace Tax Trust Deposit (full or symbolic):	\$ _____	
	\$	total funds enclosed (cheque payable to Conscience Canada)

Mail to: Conscience Canada, 901-70 Mill Street, Toronto, ON M5A 4R1
Address Correction Requested - Please let us know if you desire more or fewer copies of the newsletter