

Conscience Canada



Fall 2007 No. 93

www.consciencecanada.ca

We've Come Far, Have Far To Go

By Don Woodside

Conscience Canada (CC) will be 25 years old in Oct 2008. We are approaching a milestone, and we want to thank the many volunteers who have contributed their time, energy and enthusiasm. Through their efforts CC has become an active, creative, effective voice for conscientious objectors and war tax resistance.

In the five years since the office moved to Toronto, we have accomplished more than we could have expected or wished for. Let me itemize some of the major achievements:

In 2002-03 we rewrote the bylaws, and put the organization on a solid financial footing by using all volunteer labour and having the office in one of our homes.

In 2004 we held cross Canada dialogues in 15 communities, with 250 participants, to clarify our vision for non-violent defense and security.

In 2005 the whole board (minus one) met - for the first time - in Ottawa for a week of lobbying 20+ MPs from all four parties, which was greatly facilitated by a bilingual presence on our board, and for extensive board discussions.

In 2005 we developed the Peace Tax Return, and distributed 4000 for that tax year. We rewrote it and distributed 5500 for the 2006 tax year.

In 2006 we conducted a membership survey to learn their views and priorities.

In 2006/7 we worked on a DVD about Conscience Canada, which is now scheduled for release Sept 21. (see more elsewhere in this and the previous issue).

We created and upgraded the CC website, now an invaluable resource.

We designed a new pamphlet.

We developed a resource kit, with one-pagers on history, CO legislation, International CO actions, and a checklist for visiting your MP.

In 2007 we printed 5200 copies of a lively booklet 'Take the Bang out of your Tax Buck' by the editors of *Geez magazine*, aimed at a younger audience. Most have now been distributed.

We have had articles, letters to the editor and ads in Peace Magazine, The Georgia Straight and other publications. We had inserts of the Peace Tax Return in "Press for Conversion!" this year and last, distributing 1200 each time.

We worked on a new formulation of "An Act respecting conscientious objection to the use of taxes for military purposes which was presented in the House of Commons twice in 2006 and once in 2007 by NDP MP Bill Siksay.

Senator Nancy Ruth spoke in the Senate in June about conscientious objection to military taxation. (See her statement in this newsletter.)

We were interviewed on CBC Radio's Ontario Today¹ in June 07 on conscientious objection to military taxation.

We have distributed literature at many events, and electronically to over 300

(*Cont'd, please see WE NEED YOUR HELP on pg. 8*)

IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial by Don Woodside, We've Come So Far... p. 1

Screening of CC DVD At Int'l Peace Event, by Irene Mock...p.2

Conscientious Objection and Propaganda, by Brian McAnoy...p.3

Cross Party Support for COMT...p.4

CO ACT in Parliament... p.4

CO Declaration in the Senate...p.4

Sept 21-Oct 2: Days for Peace, by Jan Slakov...p.5

Joint Action for Nuclear Abolition and Dept. of Peace...p.5

The DVD Is On Its Way!...p.6

Correspondence with Finance Minister Flaherty...p. 7

2007 AGM update & Financial Report...insert

Membership and Donation Form...Insert

"Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms: freedom of conscience and religion..."

2a Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Constitution Act, 1981

Screening of CC DVD at Major Int'l Peace Event

By Irene Mock

A “rough cut” of the DVD, *Work for Peace...Stop Paying for War*, produced by award winning documentary filmmaker Sarah Zammit for Conscience Canada, was shown at the 2nd Our Way Home Reunion Peace Event on July 8th in B.C. The event was held to honour the contributions made to Canadian life by U.S. resisters who came to Canada during the Vietnam War, to honour those resisting current U.S. militarism by seeking safe haven in Canada now from the war in Iraq, and to honour Canadians who helped both groups resettle here.

Distinguished speakers included Daniel Ellsberg, a former US Department official famous for his release of the Pentagon Papers during the Vietnam War; Arun Gandhi, Mahatma Gandhi's grandson; Peggy Mason, Canada's former U.N. Ambassador for Disarmament; and Tom Hayden, once charged with conspiracy and inciting riots during the 60s and later a U.S. senator.

Daniel Ellsberg called President George W. Bush a “rogue emperor” who must be



Outside the Brilliant Cultural Centre, hundreds of white tombstones dotted the lawn in a memorial called Arlington North, a play on Arlington National Cemetery, the American military cemetery outside Washington D.C. Included were 66 grave markers representing Canada's casualties in Afghanistan.

reigned in by U.S. allies before he can cause any more conflicts.

“The U.S. is in violation of international conventions against war crimes and torture as it wages war in Iraq and against purported terrorist foes,” Ellsberg said, comparing the U.S. invasion of Iraq to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait and the Nazi invasion of Europe.

The worst, Ellsberg anticipates, may be yet to come. Camps are currently being built in the United States to house “hundreds of thousands” of people of Middle East descent, he said, who will be placed there immediately in the event of another 9/11. With that, he predicts thousands of people will try moving into Canada.

A yet more serious issue facing Canadians, however, is how Canada will respond if the U.S. attacks Iran—using nuclear weapons—plans for which Ellsberg said have already been approved.

“What will Canada do as a member of an alliance with a partner that conducted such aggression?” he asked. “If the U.S. uses nuclear weapons on its own against Iran does Canada stay in a military alliance with that country? Does it have any excuse for doing so?”

Tom Hayden, a major figure in the campaign to end the Vietnam War, said what is needed now to end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is “more people pressure on the pillars of policy.” Budget—people choosing domestic priorities like health care and the environment over foreign wars—is one pillar, he said. Another is international censure—even a super power can't stand alone as an occupier in a foreign land. The final pillar is moral reputation: ending torture as a part of government policy wherever it happens in the world.

Hayden was optimistic, pointing out that more large demonstrations have occurred in the last four or five years against the Iraq War than occurred in the first half of the Vietnam War. As well, Gallop polls demonstrate Americans as turning against the Iraq War faster than they turned against the Vietnam War—even though Vietnam was producing 10 times the casualties as its height.

About 2,000 people attended the five-day event at the Brilliant Cultural Centre, which was founded by the Doukhobors, whose ancestors fled Russia in 1899 after destroying their weapons in a demonstration of their refusal to fight in the Tsarist

(Cont'd, see SCREENING on pg. 8)

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

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

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of Conscience Canada. An electronic version of this newsletter is available. Please let us know your preference.

Current CC board members: Louise Dixon, Huberte Gautreau, Murray Lumley, Bruna Nota, Jan Slakov, Don Woodside
 Email: consciencecanada@shaw.ca
 Website: <http://www.consciencecanada.ca>

Conscience Canada, Fall 2007 #93

Conscientious Objection and Propaganda

By Brian McAnoy

Conscience Canada was represented by Brian McAnoy, its layout and design editor, at a conference in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the publishing of the Edward S. Herman/ Noam Chomsky book *Manufacturing Consent*. The aim of the conference, held at Windsor University from May 15 - 17, was to critically examine Chomsky & Herman's Propaganda Model as a way of understanding and improving 21st century media and society. Conscience Canada's booth helped people make the connection between International CO Day (May 15) and how mass media and the war machine are connected.

Opening speaker Amy Goodman of Democracy Now! began the conference by illustrating the importance of media in the advancement of war profiteering, reminding all that May 15th was International Conscientious Objection Day and devoted much of her speech towards the idea of weapons distribution and her experiences in East Timor, where its population was subjected to an ethnic cleansing by an unchecked military from Indonesia, its weapons and support supplied by the United States and its allies, including Canada.

Other sessions helped flesh out the theme of how mass media and militarism are connected. Titles included: "Pandering vs. Propaganda In the Run Up To The Iraq War: Journalistic Failure in U.S. Commercial Mass Media" (Mark Cooper, Yale University and Fulbright Fellow); "Manufacturing Wars: American and Canadian Newspaper Reports on Iraq, Iran and North Korea, 2001 - 2007" (Laurier University professor Kenneth Dowler); "The Propaganda Model and

the 1999 NATO Bombing of Yugoslavia" (Princeton University's Danilo Mandic); and Noam Chomsky's closing address entitled "A Poisoned Chalice: The Media and the Use of Force".

Media conglomeration in North America and worldwide has led to an oligarchic concentration of voices and while free speech is still alive and well, the volume with which one speaks is most often dictated by money and power. Within a corporate culture crucial information is often skewed by profit motive. It can be internally driven. For example, approximately 80% of major newspaper revenue is advertising based versus 20% circulation based, and the paramount duty of a corporation is to its shareholders - therefore it is only logical that advertising influence trumps reader influence. Information can also fall prey to profit through external influences. For example, if a media outlet is a smaller part of a conglomerate's holdings, the overall bottom line must take precedence. Any story critical of the holdings at large would be irresponsible to its shareholders and therefore a major media outlet whose parent company derives great profits from, say, a major weapons manufacturer, would be in conflict if it took an editorial position that would adversely affect those profits.

This leads us to why Conscience Canada chose to attend this conference, for while scores of academics were there illustrating the inherent problems of a concentrated mass media, Conscience Canada was there to offer its own alternative



CC Display. From left to right: Brian McAnoy, Prof. Patricia Mazepa (York U.) and The Guelph Dharma Centre's Robert Hillier.

vision. Perhaps the most significant event came on the last day of the conference when approximately seventy of the conference's attendees gathered together to, amongst other things, discuss the creation of an ongoing monitoring system for Canadian Media, furthering the media justice and democracy movement and building international media activism linkages. The need for independent media cannot be underscored. There is no profit motive for conscientious objection so where do CO's voices get heard within this media landscape? It must be through a truly independent media.

Brian McAnoy is a graduate of Concordia University's Creative Writing Program. In 2003 his play Christ 2: The Second Coming (This Time It's Personal) ran in March and April at the Canadian Stage Company's Berkeley Street Theatre. Currently he is involved in the Media Democracy Initiative and THAC (Toronto Haiti Action Committee).

"If we can produce in such abundance in order to wage wars and kill people we see as our enemies, surely we can produce in equal abundance to provide needed food, clothing and shelter. If we can keep people employed for the purpose of destroying human life, surely we can keep them employed for the purpose of enriching and enhancing human life"- Tommy Douglas

Cross Party Support for COMT

One of the pleasures of working on COMT (conscientious objection to military taxation) is the opportunity it affords to get to know some of Canada's most dedicated MPs and senators. In this issue we are highlighting actions from two of them, NDP MP Bill Siksay and Conservative Senator Nancy Ruth. Both have shown leadership in other areas of public life, Nancy Ruth having founded several women's organizations, supported hospitals, galleries and higher education; she

was named a member of the Order of Canada in 1994. Bill Siksay was once an assistant to MP Svend Robinson and has eagerly picked up the COMT cause since Svend left politics. His support for US war resisters seeking refuge in Canada, for the secret trial detainees, for fairness in the John Graham case and a host of other issues involving fundamental human rights is much appreciated.

forerunner, the CCF, have supported our work, we are pleased to acknowledge the support from members of other parties, including the Bloc québécois and the Liberals. The media is full of examples of partisan bickering and spin-doctoring so it's a real treat to work with MPs who use their position to promote causes of fundamental concern for democracy, justice and peace.

While many members of the NDP and its

CO Act Introduced In Parliament



On June 13, 2007, Bill Siksay (Burnaby Douglas) introduced a new version of a peace tax bill, the Conscientious Objection Act - Bill C-

460 - An Act respecting conscientious objection to the use of taxes for military purposes . Quoting the press release issued by his office:

"This Bill would recognize the very

deeply held convictions of those Canadians who believe that participating in any way in the activities of war sanctions and perpetuates killing and violence," said Siksay. "The Bill provides an important option for those who want to ensure their tax dollars are used only for peaceful purposes."

"Canada has a long history of respecting the views of those who object to participating in military action or funding," said Siksay. "I hope this tradition will be continued by the implementation of this Bill."

The Bill, seconded by NDP MP Alex Atamanenko, (B.C. Southern Interior) was re-introduced from a previous version (C-348) wherein only the portion of the conscientious objector's taxes directed to the military would be redirected to a conscientious objector account. After consultations with Conscience Canada, the Quakers, the Mennonite Central Committee, and the Mennonite Church of Canada, the Bill was re-drafted to propose the redirection of all the conscientious objector's taxes into a special account that can be used for any purpose except for a military purpose.

CO Day Declaration In The Senate

Senator Nancy Ruth made the following statement in the Senate on May 15, the International CO Day:

"Honourable Senators, I hope you had a decent Mother's Day & have filed your income tax. The two have a relationship to each other.

"American Julia Ward Howe, the author of the Battle Hymn of the Republic, saw some of the worst effects of the Civil War. She worked with widows and orphans on both sides of the war, and realized that the effects of war go beyond the killing of soldiers in battle. She saw the economic devastation

of the Civil War, the economic crises that followed the war and the restructuring of the economies of both North and South.

"In 1870, Julia Ward Howe created an anti war day that we know as Mother's Day for Peace. She was convinced that 'The sword of murder is not the balance of Justice'.

"Today is International Conscientious Objectors Day. Conscientious objectors to physical military service have been recognized in most parts of the world. Conscience Canada, along with other groups, points out that modern wars are hugely dependent on tax monies.

"For conscientious objection to be adequately recognized, citizens who object to paying for war must have the means to redirect their war taxes towards nonviolent methods of peace building. Canada has several historical precedents, recognizing conscientious objection to military taxation - starting with the War of 1812.

"Our Charter enshrined freedom of conscience based on secular morality as well as religion. In 1981, Senator Eugene Forsey and 6 other MPs said 'In times of military conscription, exemption from

(cont'd p. 8)

Sept. 21-Oct. 2: 5 Days For Peace

By Jan Slakov

Conscience Canada is joining with other peace groups to make the 12 days between Sept. 21, the International Day of Peace and Oct. 2, Gandhi's birthday and the recently declared (by the UN) International Day of Non-Violence, days of action for peace.

The more people who pick up on this idea, the more likely our actions are to have a good effect. After consulting with members and friends of Conscience Canada, here are some ideas for inspiration:

- Show the new Conscience Canada DVD, "Work for Peace. Stop Paying for War/ Travaillons pour la paix. Cessons de payer pour la guerre"

- Other films well worth watching and discussing include:

- Why We Fight

<www.sonyclassics.com/whywefight/main.html>

- Michelle Mason's new film, Breaking Ranks (NFB-ONF<<http://www.nfb.ca>>)

- films in the series, A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict, produced & directed by Steve York

- Gandhi (available at video stores)

- films about the White Rose anti-Nazi

resistance group, The White Rose (Die Weisse Rose) & Sophie Scholl: the last days (available at video stores)

- Connect with veterans. There are many chapters of the War Resisters Support Committee across Canada (<http://www.resisters.ca>) and VANA (Veterans Against Nuclear Arms) which can help with connections.

- Organize a discussion about what people are doing to work for peace. Joshua Goldberg writes: "For me, one of the most powerful acts remains the act of telling people what I am doing in my life to work for peace and where I get stuck, and listening to others do the same. In doing so I often end up talking about the contradiction I experience in working for peace yet knowing that as a settler my existence here is rooted in colonial land theft that is maintained by systematic violence. So for me, working for peace means addressing that fundamental violence of being a settler on Indigenous land, rather than thinking of violence as something that happens somewhere else."

- set up a table in a market or store and invite people to sign the petition in favour of a Conscientious Objectors' Act, or letters for peace.

- Another idea for a table is a "loonie poll", where people can choose where they would rather see their tax dollars go: to a box representing the military, or to non-violent forms of security-building.

- The Centre de resources sur la nonviolence (see <www.nonviolence.ca>) has a series of posters featuring "practitioners of nonviolence" (artisans de la nonviolence) from around the world, ranging from the well-known such as Aung San Suu Kyi or Martin Luther King, Jr. to Morihei Ueshiba (Japan) or Mahmoud Muhammad Taha (Sudan). This collection of beautiful portraits can be ordered for about \$40, translated if necessary, and could be put on display in a public place. A local person who is respected for their peace-building work could be invited to speak in conjunction with the display.

Jan Slakov is a long-time CC member, now a member at large of the CC board and an editor of this newsletter.

Joint Action for Nuclear Abolition & Dept. of Peace

As part of the lead up to the 12 days for peace, starting on Sept. 21, several groups and individuals are sending letters to the leaders of the federal parties to ask them if they will support nuclear abolition and the establishment of a Department of Peace.

We'd like to have replies to share via a press release by Sept. 21, so we are sending letters during the summer. Below is a copy of the letter Conscience Canada is sending: The Right Hon. Stephen Harper Prime Minister

Dear Prime Minister Harper,

As you know, so far the world has only experienced the use of nuclear weapons in war twice, and that was when Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed during WW II. These weapons of mass destruction must never be used again; indeed war itself threatens the future of life on this planet.

UN resolutions to dedicate this decade as the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World and September 21st as the

International Day of Peace as well as the most recent decision that Oct. 2 is the International Day of Nonviolence, demonstrate the enormous desire of people the world over to find nonviolent ways to deal with conflict and to build peace.

Given the fact that humanity faces an urgent need to redirect resources towards preparing for a sustainable future, it is imperative that we redirect resources from militarism towards these challenges.

(see bottom of next page)

The DVD Is On Its Way!

Conscience Canada's DVD "Work for Peace, Stop Paying for War" is just about ready. I've just viewed a rough cut and I was impressed by its content, its professional look, sound quality, and stylish composition. People are going to like it and it will stay with them.

Through action and lively interviews it makes a persuasive case that those who object to war and military means as offensive to conscience should not be taxed for military purposes. They'll still pay tax but into a Peace Fund, thank you very much.

The DVD has been in the works since the beginning of the year and in our naivete about the film-making world we thought it would be ready in the spring. Our award-winning director/producer Sarah Zammit had several projects on the go, however, not least giving birth to a baby boy! Now both these productions have been realized and we will all soon be able to view the DVD.

It will be launched on International Day of Peace, September 21st, in Toronto and copies will be immediately available to all who order them. We'll broadcast widely by e-mail as soon as it's ready and we'll also be happy to share the media release for anyone who wants to do a launch in their own city, to put it in their

local paper or other bulletins. In fact we encourage you to do that. You'll also be able to see the video on YouTube with a link from our website.

Remember that it's free of charge but donations to cover costs will be gratefully received.

Joan Montgomerie has been working for peace and for refugees in Toronto for the past fifteen years or so. Joan has a counselling/therapy practice in Toronto. She is really happy to engage with this worthwhile CC project!



Joint Action for Nuclear Abolition & Dept. of Peace

(cont'd from previous page)

In order to work in a systematic way towards this goal, Canada needs a Department of Peace. Such a Department would only require a budget of approximately 2% of the current international security envelope in order to begin its work.

One of the most important goals of the Canadian government as a whole, and the future Department of Peace, must be to support and bring to a successful conclusion efforts to abolish nuclear weapons.

Will you make sure that Canada takes a leading role in international negotiations for the abolition of nuclear weapons?

Will you work with the Canadian Department of Peace Initiative towards the establishment of such a department?

Please send an answer to our questions by early September, so that we can share the information you provide on the occasion of the International Day of Peace.

Sincerely,

The Board of Conscience Canada

c.c. The Hon. Stéphane Dion
The Hon. Jack Layton
l'honorable Gilles Duceppe
Elizabeth May, leader of the Green Party of Canada

Note: We sent a French version of this letter to the francophone leaders.

Conscience Canada membership

- **Member:** Open to any person committed to supporting 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. All "life memberships" dating from an earlier system are honoured.
- **Conscientious Objectors to Military Taxation (COMT):** Member who, in addition to the membership fee has deposited funds into the Peace Tax Trust account maintained by Conscience Canada.

Send in your new or renewed membership today:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Annual membership: (\$10.00/yr) \$ _____

Donations to Conscience Canada \$ _____

Peace Tax Trust Deposit (full or symbolic) \$ _____

total funds enclosed \$ _____ cheque payable to Conscience Canada

Order your free copy of the DVD 'Work for Peace. Stop Paying for War' (see below)

Address correction requested. Please let us know if you desire Conscience Canada information material, or more or fewer copies of the newsletter.

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

A new DVD by CONSCIENCE CANADA
www.consciencecanada.ca - consciencecanada@shaw.ca

Would you like to stop paying for war? Find out how by watching **Work for Peace. Stop Paying for War**, an 11 minute film by Conscience Canada and Sarah Zammit.

This fast-paced, informative, emotionally engaging DVD on conscientious objection to military taxation invites us to refuse to finance war and to redirect our taxes to peace. Notables such as Justice Thomas Berger, Hon. Jean Augustine, MP Bill Siksay, and others, discuss a wide range of issues, from the conscientious objector Tax Bill, and a citizen's responsibility to obey conscience, to nonviolent interventions, personal experience and 'how-to' advice.

To get your own free copy of: **Work for Peace. Stop Paying for War** SEND IN THIS COUPON or e-mail: consciencecanada@shaw.ca. Donations are welcome.
Please also suggest names of people who may be interested to receive the film.

Conscience Canada 2007 AGM Update & Financial Report

Conscience Canada's 2007 AGM was held in March at the Hamilton Quaker Meeting House for members to review CC's accomplishments in 2006 and its financial position.

CC's ever faithful auditor, Phillip Creighton, was re-appointed as well as our new board. The following were appointed: Louise Dixon (Treasurer), Huberte Gautreau (member at large), Murray Lumley (Secretary), Bruna Nota (President), Jan Slakov (member at large), and Don Woodside (Vice President). As you will see in the editorial (first page of this newsletter), Conscience Canada is getting a lot accomplished. However, the time for board renewal is here and we need your help! Bruna is eager to pass on the job of president and Louise has recently decided to step down as treasurer.

Below is the summary of the audited financial statements for Conscience Canada for the year ended Dec. 2006. The bank balance in the Peace Trust account is kept at a level sufficient to refund depositors who may require it on short notice. As always, if you would like a copy of the minutes, the board report or the full audited statements, just let us know and we'll send them to you as soon as we can.

Summary Financial Report

<u>For the year ended</u>	<u>dec. 06</u>	<u>dec. 05</u>
<u>Operations</u>		
Receipts		
Membership	840	660
Donations	4454	2097
Grants	2750	1750
Miscellaneous	<u>1144</u>	<u>1050</u>
Total Receipts	9188	5557
Expenses		
Newsletter	1489	1672
Special Projects	3740	2106
Outreach	2333	1248
Audit	581	570
Administration	<u>770</u>	<u>463</u>
Total Expenses	8913	6059
Net receipts	275	-502
Bank bal. end of period	7915	7018
Term deposits	12102	2065
 <u>Peace Tax Trust</u>		
Receipts	7100	5391
Disbursements	<u>188</u>	<u>2838</u>
Net receipts	6912	2553
Bank bal. end of period	14702	2936
Term deposits	14691	19545

Correspondence with Finance Minister Flaherty

Conscience Canada, Fall 2007 #3

The following is an email correspondence between conscientious objector Joshua Goldberg and Finance Minister Jim Flaherty. Mr. Flaherty's response to Joshua's initial letter (not shown) is followed by Joshua Goldberg's reply.

August 10, 2007

Dear Mr. Goldberg,

Thank you for your correspondence of March 17, 2007, in which you suggest a change to the income tax form that would put in place a mechanism for Canadians to redirect portions of their personal income taxes to a government run non-military fund.

Each year, the Government of Canada collects billions of dollars in tax revenue (more than \$200 billion in 2004-05) to support a wide range of public programs and services, ranging from support for science and innovation, to national defence and the protection of the environment.

Allowing taxpayers to direct their tax dollars to only certain programs and services would be neither democratic nor practical. It would effectively mean, for instance, that wealthier Canadians who pay higher taxes would have a greater say in the functioning of the country, through their decisions which programs and services to fund (or not to fund). Our system of parliamentary democracy is designed to ensure that each citizen carries an equal voice, and that the priority of the government reflect, as best as possible, the wishes of all Canadians. Allowing each taxpayer to allocate his or her taxes among the many government programs and services would be tremendously complicated, and would make funding for ongoing government services less reliable, making it much more difficult to plan and deliver these services effectively.

Our new Government is committed to responding to Canadians' concerns about how their tax dollars are being spent,

both in terms of the appropriateness of individual expenditures and the value they are getting for their money.

Thank you for communicating your concerns.

Sincerely,

James M. Flaherty

* * * * *

Joshua Goldberg's reply:

Dear Mr. Flaherty,

Thank you for your thoughtful (and thought provoking) email. I appreciate the time you have taken to genuinely engage with the questions my email raised.

I agree with you that it is very difficult to balance individual conscience and beliefs with collective responsibility. We have had many discussions about this within Conscience Canada. Would we, by arguing for legislation to provide an alternative to conscientious objectors to military taxation, be opening up the floodgate to individuals who resent paying for social assistance, subsidized housing, etc.?

In seeking to answer this question, we looked to Canadian history. As you may be aware, Canada has respected conscientious objection to military service on religious grounds since 1793. During times of military conscription, alternative non-combatant service has been arranged for Canadians who refuse to participate in war for reasons of conscience. There are also Canadian precedents for recognizing conscientious objections to paying for the military. For example, in 1841, conscientious objectors to the militia tax were allowed to redirect these taxes to public works. In the First and Second World Wars, conscientious objectors 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.

In all these cases, provisions for conscientious objectors in Canadian law have not led to a flood of other groups requesting similar treatment for other issues. We are therefore optimistic that our proposal will not set a precedent for withdrawal of tax money from other government programs.

Your concerns about politically privileging wealthy individuals are important. Within the current systems, people with disposable income already have political/economic privileges and benefits as they can reduce their share of income tax by taking full advantage of government-approved deductions and credits. Although the process creates disparities of choice about where to direct income tax, these deductions and credits are not wholly negative — they are ways that the federal government encourages a socially useful activity, such as charitable donations or retirement savings. We see building peace as an eminently useful social activity, and would like to provide people (of all economic brackets) who object to violence the opportunity to contribute to peacebuilding activities that will be of benefit to Canada and to the rest of the world.

The questions that you raise are important ones, and I hope you will continue to engage with Conscience Canada so that our proposal to create a legal option for conscientious objectors to military taxation will be relevant, practical, and workable.

Warm regards,

Joshua Mire Goldberg
Coast Salish Territory

We have not heard back from Mr. Flaherty since Joshua's correspondence. We hope that Mr. Flaherty takes the time to kindly respond once again.

Joshua Mira Goldberg, living in Coast Salish Territory, has been a conscientious objector to military taxation since 2002.

We Need Your Help

(cont'd from pg. 1 WE'VE COME)

peace and justice organizations. We have found funding for the DVD, and we received generous donations.

We were represented at the 2005 and 2007 International Peace Tax Conference.

We have distributed over 800 copies of two newsletters per year for the last five years.

We feel as though we are on the brink of a breakthrough to a much higher profile for CC and fiscal conscientious objection.

HOWEVER, WE NEED YOUR HELP.

Most of this work has been done by the

board and a small group of volunteers. Bruna is planning to retire as President at the next AGM (maybe we should just avoid calling another AGM!) although she will continue to be involved. As of this writing we are looking for a replacement for Louise Dixon, our treasurer, who has had to step down for personal reasons. (Both Bruna and Louise are willing to help with the transition phase). To allow CC to carry on effectively, the board needs three more people who are willing to make a serious commitment.

We have exciting opportunities to build on the momentum we have created. There is genuine satisfaction from this work. The board offers wonderful camaraderie whether in person, by phone, or email, with other committed COs from across the country - and part of our plan is to

meet face to face in Ottawa every two years for lobbying.

We know everyone is busy. We know we are competing with commitments to many other highly valued organizations. But the question is, are there people willing to ensure that Conscience Canada continues to thrive? Will one of them be you?

If you are interested, please phone, email or write Bruna Nota at the CC address.

Don Woodside is a long-time CC member, peace tax trustee and member of the Religious Society of Friends who lives in Hamilton. Now retired from psychiatry, Don has contributed many hours to the CC board, with a major focus recently being on the DVD.

Screening of CC DVD at Major Int'l Peace Event

(cont'd from pg. 2)

army. Russian author Leo Tolstoy donated proceeds from the sale of his book "Resurrection" to help pay for the Doukhobours to travel as new immigrants to Canada, where they were assured their right to conscientious objection would be respected.

A wide variety of workshops were held on the last two days of the event, including a workshop on peace tax. The DVD on peace tax was a great resource for the workshop and provided a focus for newcomers and converted alike.

Also speaking at the event were Bill Siksay, MP Burnaby-Douglas, sponsor of Private Members Bill C-460 (Conscientious Objectors Act), and Jeffrey House, attorney for AWOLs from Iraq hoping to claim refugee status. Mr. House is in the process of appealing the refugee claims of two AWOLs from Iraq to the Supreme Court of Canada, where he hopes to extend the definition of conscience: If a particular war is illegal, can a soldier refuse to fight in it? He cites the case of an Iraqi soldier who refused to invade Kuwait with Saddam Hussein—now an established precedent for soldiers

being entitled to refuse to participate in a war that is illegal.

For more information about the event go to www.ourwayhomereunion.com

Irene Mock immigrated to Canada with her first husband, a Vietnam War resister, in 1972. A nurse and teacher, she has been a member of Conscience Canada for 25 years. She is the author of Inappropriate Behaviour, a collection of short stories, and is starting to work with Kootenay Co-op Radio as a co-producer of The Writers' Show.

Senator Nancy Ruth Makes CO Day Declaration In The Senate

(cont'd from pg. 4)

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 taxes intended for war preparation and a related alternative should be offered'.

"I am one of these Canadians, who for

some years has withheld from my income

tax payment, the percentage of the military budget. I have put that money on deposit with a peace tax fund called Conscience Canada.

"I encourage you to do so too, and to work for the right of Canadians
1 -to legally & consciously object,

2 -to pay taxes for peace, instead of the military.

3 -and thirdly, I ask you to support [the] bill [C348] when it gets to us.

As Ward Howe said...

"The sword of murder is not the balance of Justice".

Thank you Honourable Senators."