

Work For Peace... Stop Paying For War
Conscience Canada



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Looking for a President



BY DON WOODSIDE

I will be stepping down as president of CC at the next AGM in the spring of 2010, and the board hasn't yet identified a successor. Several members have indicated their willingness to continue to serve on the board, so the backbone of the organization remains firm, but it needs a new head.

CC has been very active for several years, making opportunities and seizing others as they come by. We have an excellent newsletter, an extensive website, a vibrant DVD. We have developed an electronic version of the Peace Tax Return which has made a declaration of

conscience much simpler. There is support in Parliament from at least one Liberal, one Conservative, and several NDP, and we have good connections with sympathetic voices in the Bloc Quebecois and the Green Party.

All of these innovations have made considerable demands on the board and a small circle of other volunteers. This level of activity may be a discouragement to some contemplating taking over as president. One of the options open to CC is to scale down to a maintenance pattern, issuing 2 newsletters, maintaining the website, updating the PTR, and responding to the occasional opportunity to spread the word and support the legislation.

We are profoundly in need of people to step forward, to join the board, but even more to take over as president. Our constitution requires

a president, and without one we cannot continue to function on the practical level. The alternative is not pretty; we may need to fold up.

We are asking all of you to look deeply to see if you could take this on at least for the next year. I can tell you that personally the work has been very satisfying, and an opportunity to get to know a wonderful group of people. If you step forward, you will be supported by an experienced board which can offer support and mentoring.

If you are one of the many people who value and support Conscience Canada, please reflect on this opportunity for service: if not me, then who?

Don is a peace activist, long time participant in Conscience Canada, father of two, retired psychiatrist, who lives and plays in Hamilton.

“**Cowardice** asks the question - is it safe?

Expediency asks the question - is it politic?

Vanity asks the question - is it popular?

But **conscience** asks the question - is it right?

And there comes a time when one must take

a position that is neither safe, nor politic,
nor popular; but one must take it because it is **right.**”

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Spring Campaign 2009

In the spring of 2008 we hired Anna Kirkpatrick to run a 'spring campaign' for us. She later joined the board.

In early 2009, we hired Kate Penner, a former coordinator of Conscience Canada when it was situated in Victoria, to manage our

outreach over the period between Feb and May.

She sent out mailings to our supporters (some with reminders!), encouraging them to undertake any of a number of activities; write or visit their MP, make a public presentation of the DVD, write a letter

to the editor or an op-ed piece. She provided sample MP letters, and sample letters to the editor. She sent emails to friendly MPs and Senators, arranging that the email come from one of our members who had had personal contact with them .

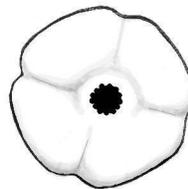
By the numbers

- 2009: 55 Peace Tax depositors
- 106 letters to Minister of Finance
- 65 Option A of the Peace Tax Return (declaration of conscience)
- 32 Option B (accompanying a peace tax deposit)
- Articles in the United Church Observer, Canadian Mennonite, Canadian Friend, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom newsletter; info to all Unitarian congregations, ad in Briarpatch magazine, Peace Tax Return insert in Peace Magazine
- 11 public events
- 2 letters to ed/op-ed
- current membership 149, plus those who have not renewed/paid up yet
- 2008: 56 Peace Tax depositors, plus 15 depositors transferred from Nos Impôts pour la Paix, the parallel Quebecois organization which folded in 2007
- 24 Peace Tax Returns sent to CC
- Newsletter circulation 1200, of which 745 go to active individual contacts
- 2007: 39 Peace Tax depositors (for a running total of 67 tax resisters)

White doves, poppies, for peace

For the International Day of Peace, September 21, and the Days of Remembrance in November, consider these resources:

www.whitepeacedoves.org — www.ppu.org.uk
Sample white poppies, lesson ideas available from:
janslavkov@shaw.ca (250) 537-5251



A B O U T

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

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

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of Conscience Canada.

An electronic version of this newsletter is available at www.ConscienceCanada.ca. Please let us know your preference.

B O A R D

Benno Barg, Anna Kirkpatrick, Murray Lumley, Jonathan Seiling, Jan Slavkov, Don Woodside

Dr. Jane Pritchard speaks at CC AGM

Conscience Canada (CC) held its Annual General Meeting on Saturday, February 28th at Friends House in Toronto.

Standing for election and confirmed for the positions were President, Don Woodside, Vice-President, Jan Slakov, Treasurer, Benno Barg, Secretary, Murray Lumley and board members at large, Anna Kirkpatrick and Jonathan Seiling.

Our guest speaker was CC member Dr. Jane Pritchard of Toronto, who is one of the six interviewees on the CC DVD. Her inspiring talk focused on her engagement with her husband Doug, in active peacemaking as they lived in Pakistan, Australia and in Toronto. In 1991, at the request of a Mennonite friend, she visited Iraq, which led to their involvement in the creation of Christian Peacemaker Teams. Jane also spoke of her medical service to refugees, street people and the elderly and



Dr. Jane Pritchard

her participation in Lazarus Rising, a Mennonite street ministry in Toronto. She also shared some of her experiences with government of withholding war taxes.

Former CC president Bruna Nota reports on a most encouraging exchange with someone from the CRA National Collection Agency. “He called about my outstanding balance in my tax account and he wanted to know how he could help me pay it. I told him that, as a CO I had deposited any amount owing into a Peace Trust account held by CC waiting for legislation to protect that money from being spent on war or preparation for war. He asked me to hold on the phone a moment. When he came back he said that he will put a note into my account indicating that I am a CO and the money is deposited in escrow, that this money would revert to the government the moment CO legislation is passed and that the government will then be able to use as it sees fit for peaceful purposes. He ended the conversation saying: ‘with this note on your file you’ll be good to go’.

Encouraging, eh?

Whether or not we encounter helpful or negative responses to our witness as COs, it is surely always useful to take the time to make our thoughts and feelings known

Step Up Your Involvement

You are receiving this newsletter because you support the aims of Conscience Canada. Perhaps you would like to take a more active role by volunteering some of your time. Whether you are itching to take on a major new project or have only a few minutes to spare, there are many ways to get involved with Conscience Canada. Volunteer opportunities range from the simple to the sublime (!)

So feel free to contact consciencecanadaoutreach@gmail.com to explore the possibilities. We would be happy to supply you with brochures, newsletters, DVDs or any other materials you might need.

The Conscription of taxes

Below are excerpts from an article by Dr. J. Prior, first published in the WILPF newsletter of winter '08/'09

As a conscientious objector to using force in an effort to solve conflicts, I would refuse to serve in the military if I were conscripted. That is unlikely because I am 65 years old and a professor at the University of British Columbia's school of medicine. However, a much more subtle form of conscription is happening every April – this is the conscription of our taxes. [...] More information is available through www.consciencecanada.ca.

In a round about way conscientious objection to military taxation plus my belief that health care is a human right led me to immigrate to Canada from the USA in 1976. During the early part of the Vietnam war I was a student without taxes to pay. However, in 1969 I was employed as a medical intern at Boston City Hospital. It was so abhorrent to me to pay for the invasion of Vietnam that I wrote that I had 10 dependents on my form so that money would not be deducted at source. When I completed the form at tax time I made "war crimes deductions" equal the amount I was to pay, and instead paid that amount to a local group doing community building. From then on I continued to pay all taxes owing but into a local charity

instead of to military coffers.

I was delighted, when I came to Canada, that a fledgling organization under care of the Quaker Meeting in Victoria was beginning a Peace Tax campaign. That became Conscience Canada that today has about 200 active members who pay into a trust fund the moneys that would otherwise go to Canada's military. From 1982, after the Charter of Rights and Freedoms was established, I deducted the military portion of my taxes owing and deposited them with Conscience Canada. My bank accounts were seized. I took the issue to the Tax Court and hence through lower courts and appeals to the Supreme Court. With the help of Thomas Berger, we even appealed to the UN Human Rights Committee. At each and every stage, this legal expression of conscientious process was denied.

Now, I no longer owe taxes because of deductions from my income and increased expenses for research. However, I continue to declare each year my conscientious objection. For me, this is a basic expression of religious freedom. If others who feel the same were to make their voices heard, Canada would become a country that respects the conscience of its citizens.

UBC Professor Dr. Jerilynn Prior is a past clerk and continues to be active with the Vancouver Friends (Quaker) Meeting. From 1986 to

1991 Dr. Prior undertook legal action to gain recognition for the right to refuse to pay for war and militarism. Information about her work is available at www.cemcor.ubc.ca

Excerpts from a letter sent to the Kingston Whig-Standard:

Currently we have in Canada no compulsory draft to compel service in the armed forces. But many are drawn in, and I mourn for those whom we are teaching that it is normal to participate in violence as much as I mourn for those they kill.

What is now conscripted is money, and I believe that we have responsibility for the use of our money. I welcome attempts to introduce legislation providing for the payment by conscientious objectors to war of the equivalent of the military portion of their taxes into a fund reserved for peaceful purposes.

Meanwhile, I donate to CONSCIENCE CANADA, and when my income was not too small to pay any taxes, I did not -- for a number of years -- voluntarily pay the military portion, placing it instead in Conscience Canada's trust fund. [...] More information on the alternatives open to those whose conscience is uneasy at contributing to war can be found at www.consciencecanada.ca

Jo Vellacott is a WW II veteran and long time peace and justice advocate.

* * * *

Excerpts from peace tax letters sent to MPs, Spring 2009:

M.P. Jim Karygiannis recently estimated that some 40% of Canadian industry is directly or indirectly connected with our growing military-industrial complex. We are now keenly aware of the wisdom that the late President (and previously five-star general) Eisenhower expressed when he warned of the increasing power of the U.S. military-industrial complex.

Canada is on the path that the U.S. has paved, and then expected Canada to follow. As President Obama has made so clear, the U.S. has lost its moral compass. I cannot, in conscience, support Canada's move in this direction.

And so I join others in Conscience Canada in registering my deeply felt objection to paying for war.

Richard Preston, Ancaster, ON

As a physician, I regard war as an archaic form of interpersonal relationship on a grand scale but much like bullying on the playground or spousal abuse. Just as these activities were once wide-spread and ignored, so utterly, do I believe that war will be one day regarded as obscene. Its utter waste of human resource - lives, intelligence, time and money - devoted to childish "games" will eventually end - or the human race ends.

Dale Dewar, MD, Wynyard, SK

I want my taxes:

- to work for peace, not for land mines or explosives;
- to work for peace, not for the trauma and deaths of more and more Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan;
- to work for peace, not for the

more than \$22 billion for Canada's military spending;

- to work for peace, not for more and more Afghani casualties who



will become innocent civilian victims – especially women and children hurt and mentally traumatized by violence of war; and

- to work for peace, not for actions that will leave more and more Afghani people homeless.

Dianne Goldberg, Halfmoon Bay BC

As one who believes in taxation, which is supposed to support the well-being of all, I profoundly object to the use of my taxes for military purposes.

I would willingly be taxed for peaceful purposes through a specially constituted Peace Tax Fund. Until such an arrangement is made, I will contribute an amount equal to the 8.5% of my 2008 taxes to Conscience Canada.

Helen Brink, Greensville, ON

Of course, people across Canada, from Ottawa, ON, Fernie, BC, St. John's NL, Waterloo, ON, , Baden, ON, Burnaby, BC, Dolbeau, QC and many other locations sent in the sample letter from our website. It reminds MPs that, "This kind of tax provision [proposed by Bill C-460] is needed in order for Canada to respect its commitment to freedom of conscience."

The Emperor's soldiers of the new age are turning to smarter bombs, better missiles, and more intelligent machines called robots. But these don't bring victory. Others have turned to nonviolence, an old force but newly discovered by those who resisted Robert [MacNamara]. Even non-violence is studied for ways it can be used or manipulated for imperial ends. Bits and pieces are borrowed but disembodied nonviolent tactics **are lifeless without authentic love, a vision for transformation and conviction behind them.**

- Gene Stoltzfus Blog: <http://peaceprobe.wordpress.com/>

Book review

By Bruna Nota

WE WILL NOT FIGHT BY WILL ELLSWORTH-JONES

The 2008 November remembrance days were particularly poignant for me as I was reading a book chronicling the evolution of the concept of conscientious objection in the build-up to and during WWI, and the legacy left for future generations by the ordeal of those Conscientious Objectors - derisively called "conchies".

Will Ellsworth-Jones' book, *We*

Will Not Fight, explores Conscientious Objection in WWI through the true story of two British brothers - one who was prepared to die fighting; the other, Bert, who was prepared to die refusing to fight.

In following Bert's life, one sees how the perception of war and conscientious objection have evolved over the years. Initially, the war was seen as "some kind of enjoyable and short lived romp", but soon, despite intense censorship, people realized the reality was totally different. In passing even a flawed exemption measure for CO's Britain was set "apart from both allies and adversaries".

But COs remained a challenge

for parliamentarians, tribunals, the military and the general public alike who mostly reacted with a great deal of resentment and scorn.

Even though CO's were subject to intense resentment and scorn, through their efforts, by WW II conscientious objection was widely recognized and today military conscription is more and more difficult for governments to contemplate.

The WWI COs prepared the ground on which the notion and reality of fiscal conscientious objection can take viable roots in Canada and around the world. To progress further today we must again count on dedicated witnesses ready to pay dearly

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Conscience Canada membership application / renewal

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. (Address correction requested)

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

Receipts will be issued for donations of \$ 25 or more and for all Peace Tax Deposits.

I'd like to help. Contact me about volunteering for Conscience Canada

Send me: free copy/ies of the CC info material (pls: specify or give purpose)
 More (fewer) copies of newsletter Electronic version only



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

Visit: www.consciencecanada.ca

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for their convictions, on influential advocates to help enact the necessary legislative and institutional changes, and most of all on a population that deeply abhors violence, is convinced of the futility and senselessness of war and actively seeks alternatives to war and violence. We have a long way to go before we can rest, but we can persistently and effectively cultivate the field so that future generations may harvest the fruits of peace.

Never again should we read a newspaper's headline such as the one on 5 Nov. 2008: "Air strikes kill dozens of wedding guests". Never again should we mourn the obscene heavy military casualties of previous wars or the civilian casualties and earth despoliation that war wreaks.

Never again should poets have the material to write songs such as Eric Bogle's Willie McBride's (also known as No Mans Land or The Green Field of France):

"And I can't help but wonder oh, Willy McBride, Do all those who lie here know why they died, Did you really believe them when they told you the cause, Did you really believe that this war would end wars, Well the suffering, the sorrow, the glory, the shame, The killing and dying it was all done in vain, Oh Willy McBride it all happened again, And again, and again, and again."

Publishing News describes the book thusly: "It is by now a rare experience to read a book on that war which seems wholly fresh and original, but this is such a book." If you would like to borrow the Conscience Canada copy, let us know and we will arrange to lend it to you.

Although she is no longer the president of Conscience Canada, Bruna is still actively involved in CC's work. She is also involved in local communi-

ty-building efforts such as neighbourhood gardening.

Book review

By Rob Acheson

THE THIN BLUE LINE: HOW HUMANITARIANISM WENT TO WAR BY CONOR FOLEY

Conor Foley has been a humanitarian aid worker in over a dozen conflict zones including Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Northern Uganda. His latest book traces the development of the doctrine of humanitarian intervention and how it has been used to justify the use of force by powerful states. His first-hand accounts brought me a new understanding of events that occurred in these places.

The book explores two related, but distinct phenomena: the politicization of humanitarian aid, and the use of ethical, 'humanitarian' justifications for war and intervention. Where emergency humanitarian aid should be neutral, it is increasingly being made into an instrument of policy; and where state policy should be concerned with strategic interest, it now often claims to be about ethics and humanitarianism.

In the past, there was clear distinction between the neutral, non-political provision of emergency relief and the more strategic uses of aid. During the Cold War, for example, both sides would use development assistance to support their allies, while the work of NGOs was often in solidarity with campaigns protesting injustice and oppression in the Third World. Humanitarian aid, on the other hand, was understood differently. Its concern was to relieve the worst symptoms of human suffering in crises and conflicts, not to address underlying causes or to make moral judgments.

Gradually, the trends have come

together in the international response to famine and to conflict. We hear complaints that humanitarian aid is sustaining war economies, as local militia loot supplies and use aid to buy weapons and then there are calls for military interventions to sort out the 'warlords' or protect relief supplies.

Western governments are now responding with military mobilization in the name of humanitarianism. One US official coined the term 'shoot-to-feed' to describe a mission which turned the delivery of aid into a military operation, while reorienting Western foreign policy around 'humanitarian' objectives.

The results are disastrous for all concerned: the military mission ends in failure, the independence of aid workers is compromised, and those who supposed to be helped are shot and tortured by international forces as their country descends further into chaos.

The Thin Blue Line helped me to understand the political complexities that our best intentions encounter when trying to relieve or resolve the problems of the world. In many ways the NGO/humanitarian/human rights industry is becoming as problematic as many government actions.

It is an unsettling book, because it challenges liberal, western notions of right and wrong, help and harm. On a personal note, I am coming to realize that durable solutions to wars, famines, natural disasters etc. cannot be imposed from outside but must come from structures already in place within the affected nations. It is these structures that we are advocating for through the creation of Departments of Peace in governments around the world.

Rob Acheson is Co-Chair of the Toronto Chapter of the Canadian Department of Peace Initiative

Dept. of Peace postcards

If we want peace and security, how should we invest our time and energies? The predominant reliance on military “security” has led us to a point where, with only about one third of what the world spends on its militaries, it could pay for a host of programs that would doubtless make this world a safer, fairer

Let’s try to make sure each MP gets at least one of these...

place for all. Such programs include landmine removal, providing safe drinking water, health care and housing for all, ending illiteracy, reversing deforestation, to name a few. (This conclusion was reached by the World Game

Develop new approaches to non-violent interventions

Transform conflicts through peaceful means

Support a culture of peace and assertive non-violence

Halt the proliferation and production of nuclear weapons

**CANADA NEEDS...
A DEPARTMENT OF PEACE**
(www.departmentofpeace.ca)

Create sustainable peace

Encourage the development of peace initiatives in cities and local communities

Re-establish Canada's role as a global peacemaker and peacebuilder

Institute, which used a variety of sources such as the UNDP in its calculations.)

Now an Ontario-based group called the Sisters for Peace has produced a postcard to send to parliamentarians, to let them know we want a Dept. of Peace so that Canada will do much more

to promote real security.

To get an electronic copy of the postcards, or for more information, please contact Eleanor Hart at eleanorh@golden.net. Let’s try to make sure each MP gets at least one of these... and that, as a society, we invest in peace, not war.

**NEW
EMAIL!**

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Newsletter designed by Din
Visit: www.dinarts.com

“... in the conflicts in the past 15 years, only 7.5% have ended with a military victory by one party over the other. The negotiation route, though long and difficult, is the one that prevails in 92% of the cases. The challenge is thus not being a skillful warrior but a skillful negotiator.”

- 2008 Peace Process Yearbook,
School for a Culture of Peace, Autonomous University of Barcelona