

Work For Peace... Stop Paying For War

Conscience Canada



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Conscientious Objection & The Responsibility to Protect

After the world failed to prevent the genocide in Rwanda, Kofi Annan made an eloquent plea to the UN: "If humanitarian intervention is indeed an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to

and to rebuild. It is a broad policy of mostly non-violent intervention, but most of the attention has focused on the 'react' part, especially military intervention. R2P stirs intense debate in the peace community, and even in Conscience Canada (CC).

COs historically have not judged whether a war was just or not when they refused to participate. CC has, in general, opposed all military activity, and this was highlighted in our Dialogues of 2004 (see our website for details). However, in 2006, the board was convinced by an

Afghani doctor who had left the McMaster Dept. of Peace Studies to take

a position in the Afghan government, that a 'third option' for Afghanistan, which included negotiating with all parties, including the Taliban, as well as the deployment of Canadian peacekeeping forces for protecting civilians (not search

and destroy missions) was worth supporting. In the 1980s Edith Adamson, CC's founder, had no objection to Canadian blue berets holding the Green Line in Cyprus. A Thai Buddhist peace activist, Sulak Sivaraska, blessed the Thai troops when they sailed for UN duty in East Timor. In each case there were compelling reasons to support the presence of a lightly armed body to keep order.

The most obvious objection to R2P is that power politics have a lot to do with where and when intervention occurs. William Shabas, internationally known expert on genocide and human rights law, said that R2P is being applied selectively by the great powers.* He likened it to having a police force

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* On CBC Radio's *Metro Morning*, Aug 2, 2011
Cover Art: 'I Love No F-35' by Din, 2011



Also inside: Motion on F-35s p.5

a Rwanda – to gross and systemic violations of human rights that affect every precept of our common humanity?" Out of this was born the "Responsibility to Protect" doctrine (R2P) which includes the responsibility to prevent, to react ,

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Bill Siksay, Jack Layton, Libby Davies, Vancouver Pride parade, 2008

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, Bryan Eelhart, Mary Groh, Anna Kirkpatrick, Murray Lumley, Jan Slakov, Don Woodside

The board of Conscience Canada shares with many other Canadians deep sadness at the passing of Jack Layton, and much gratitude for the way he embodied a life of love, hope and optimism.

PEACE TAX

Tax me not
for the purpose of war
when the world
is in need of peace.
Guns and bombs
can never buy
democracy's release.

Take my dollar
and build a bridge
between opposing sides
let understanding and dialogue
conquer what divides.
Invest in peace
and you will make
the world a better place
wherein the need
for guns and bombs
will be at last, erased.

By Jeevan Bhagwat

Contest Winners Announced

The art/me-
dia contest
sponsored by
Conscience Canada
generated a variety
of creative entries of
which 3 prize-winning
entries were selected

by the board. These can be seen in this issue of the newsletter: the Peace Tax poem by Jeevan Bhagwat, of Scarborough, Ont., a painting entitled Anxiety by Muriel (Rhyl) Stollery, in Edmonton, and a photo art piece by Shereen Mroueh, Ont.



"Anxiety" by Muriel (Rhyl) Stollery

Through the contest we learned of the Poets Against War/Poètes contre la guerre initiative: www.poetsagainstawar.ca. This group welcomes submissions in English or French, of anti-war, pro-peace poems for their website.

The Board at Work

The Conscience Canada pamphlet was revised in June, updating the graphs and statistics and a few other minor details in keeping with the 2011 state of the organization. The zine, entitled *A Guide to Conscientious Objection to Military Taxation*, was published in March, replacing *Take the Bang out of your Tax Buck*. Both of these publications can be read on our new website. Paper copies to hand out can be ordered (free) from Conscience Canada. You are encouraged to make use of these promotional tools.

Bryan Eelhart has set up a new user-friendly website for CC, which includes the option of donating online.

Conscientious objection to military taxation was promoted at several special events, including a "loonie poll" in Hamilton. A display, including a screening of our DVD., was mounted for the 5 days of Mennonite Church Canada Assembly in July at the University of Waterloo campus. Several new members joined CC, and 21 signed the Petition to Parliament asking for the CO Act to be passed.

The August 6 Hiroshima Day commemoration event at Holy Trinity Church behind the Eaton Centre in Toronto saw Mary and Murray again staffing an exhibit and handing out material. If only our presence could have been half as impressive as the traditional Japanese Yakudo drummers! They created the right atmosphere for thinking about the atomic bomb explosion.

A new sponsor for our private member's bill is being contacted by Anna Kirkpatrick. Since the retirement of Bill Siksay, who introduced a couple of bills for CC, this task is being considered by Alex Atamanenko, NDP member for B.C. Southern Interior, who co-sponsored Bill C 390. Some revisions to this bill are being suggested to MP Atamanenko for the next COMT bill he will hopefully introduce to the new Parliament.

By Mary Groh

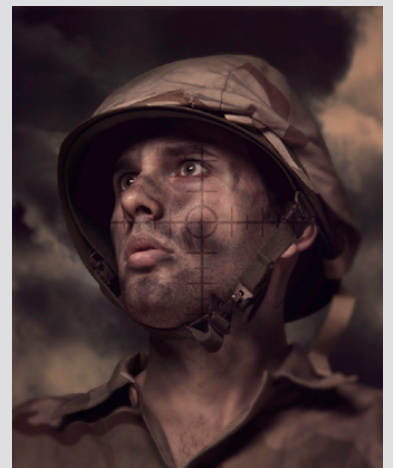


Bill Siksay

"My predecessor Svend Robinson once remarked that the highest duty of a member of Parliament is love. Love should be our daily agenda, a daring, justice-seeking and tender love. Someday, even here [in Parliament], we will find that path where all we do we do for love." ~ Bill Siksay

Having read a statement by Canon Raven, entitled *War is Obsolete*, and feeling deeply that Jesus would not have been willing to participate in war, Ed Abbott was a conscientious objector during WW II. He and other medical students were required to sign up for the officer corps in order to be permitted to stay in medical school (and their studies were paid for by the government as well). Ed and one other conscientious objector were sent off to work building roads so they were not able to graduate with their class. However, the class insisted on including them in class reunion events.

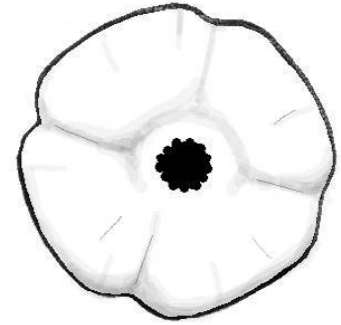
And one other student, a Jew, came up to Ed after the war and congratulated him; Ed, he said, had at least been doing something useful. (As the war continued, Ed was eventually able to work with the AFSC in a medical corps in China.)



Soldier in Gunsight
by Shereen Mroueh

Conscience Canada
Statement of Receipts and Disbursements
For 7 Months Ended July 31, 2011

	Operating	Trust Funds
Receipts		
Peace Tax Deposits Received		10,538.03
Donations	7,322.79	
Interest and Other Receipts	1,167.70	
Total Receipts	8,490.49	10,538.03
Disbursements		
Peace Tax Deposits Refunded		13,813.60
Newsletter	2,239.25	
Outreach	3,761.49	
Website	121.70	
Professional Services	1,177.00	
Directors and Officers Liability Insurance	918.00	
Administration	691.93	
Donations to Sister Organizations	200.00	
Total Disbursements	9,109.37	13,813.60
Excess (Deficiency) of Receipts Over Disbursements	(618.88)	(3,275.57)
Fund Balance		
Fund Balance - Opening	28,758.21	58,389.27
Excess (Deficiency) of Receipts Over Disbursements	(618.88)	(3,275.57)
Net Fund Balance	28,139.33	55,113.70



White Poppy Time

The Quebec peace group, Échec à la guerre, is launching a major white poppy campaign, ordering 5000 poppies from England. The rest of Canada will be challenged to keep up with our francophone counterparts!

Author Heather Menzies, Jan Slakov and others are preparing a small peace education kit to go with this year's white poppy campaign. To get a copy, please contact:

consciencecanada@consciencecanada.ca

Report on Conscience Canada AGM, April 2, 2011

Ten members attended this year's AGM with 14 additional proxies plus two guests. Mary Groh, of Toronto, President of the board presided over the meeting. Other previous members continuing on the board are: Benno Barg, of Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario, Anna Kirkpatrick of Nelson, B.C., Murray Lumley of Toronto, Ontario, Jan Slakov of Salt Spring Island, B.C. and Don Woodside of Hamilton, Ontario. Bryan Eelhart of Toronto was newly elected to the board. Bryan volunteered to overhaul CC's website to make it more interactive. He will also act as the webmaster for the new CC website. Jonathan Seiling

of St. Catharines, Ontario announced his resignation from the board. Many thanks to Jonathan, who remains a member of CC, for all his great ideas and hard work on behalf of Conscience Canada since 2009.

At 3 PM in the Grand Hall of Conrad Grebel College, guest speaker Paul C. Heidebrecht of Mennonite Central Committee Canada, Ottawa Office, spoke to an audience of 30 to 40 people. A synopsis of his talk, *Pacifist-Friendly Legislation in Canada: Can Bill C-390, C-440, and C-447 Contribute to a More Peaceful Society*, is available on the Conscience Canada website.

Endorsements

CC endorsed the G20 Redux event, one year after the G20 summit in downtown Toronto, the biggest mass arrests in Canadian peace time history and an unprecedented degree of infringement of individual civil liberties and fundamental freedoms. The event was part of a larger effort to show Canadians care about fundamental freedoms and to ensure that such gross human rights violations never happen again.

CC also supported the Hiroshima Day Coalition (Toronto) and the War Resisters Support Campaign.

CC joined several other groups in the Spring

“A person is considered complicit if, while aware of the commission of war crimes or crimes against humanity, the person contributes directly or indirectly to their occurrence.”

—Canada's Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Program

Nuremberg Action Group (SNAG) protest of the CANSEC weapons fair. Board member Murray Lumley was one of 8 people who risked arrest in their efforts to:

- inform exhibitors and participants that war shows like CANSEC violate Nuremberg principles
- ask them to sign a pledge to observe Nuremberg principles and disarm

We also endorsed the following motion at a meeting on military spending on May 1, 2011:

Motion on F-35s

Whereas the F-35 Stealth Fighter-bomber is designed for First-Strike attacks, and would be ineffective for Canadian security

Whereas there is no Russian military threat to the Canadian Arctic: NORAD's U.S. commander flatly stated he sees no challengers in the Arctic

Whereas the F-35 is expensive - certainly more than \$35 billion for 65 stealth fighters, built by Lockheed-Martin in the U.S., not even providing jobs for Canada

Whereas funds should be spent on urgent public priorities, such as health care, children, the environment, education, local and global peace-building initiatives, ending poverty

Therefore be it resolved that the government abandon the proposed purchase of F-35 Stealth Fighters and re-allocate the funds to peace-building, measures addressing the climate crisis, and the better health and welfare of all Canadians

Endorsed by VOW, VANA, WILPF, Conscience Canada, For Our Grandchildren, and interested citizens

Our Newest Board Member



Bryan Eelhart joined Conscience Canada as a board member in the spring of 2011. He is also a board member of the Canadian Secular Alliance and an active Green Party member. Bryan has been a machinist, stock broker in Amsterdam and the General Manager of a sawmill in Tanzania, but is now happy to work as a property manager in Toronto. When he is not busy with activism or work, Bryan and his wife Karolina enjoy the arts - attending the theatre or opera a couple of times per month, going to the AGO and ROM regularly and attending Tafelmusik and Toronto Symphony Orchestra concerts.

Bryan hopes to extend the outreach efforts of Conscience Canada and to this end has updated our website and is working on course materials for presentations he hopes to put before the activist community and school children. Please feel free to contact Bryan at anytime at 416 824 8334 or bryan@consciencecanada.ca.

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in a town which only enforces laws to the benefit of the powerful in the town. That sounded like a pretty accurate interpretation of what we see; military intervention in Libya, not in Syria.

The debate is often framed as “either/or”; military or nil, when in fact the story of nonviolent intervention forms a rich tapestry of strategies for use both by civilian populations, and by the UN and other governing bodies. There are many stories of successful non violent uprisings by populations, Egypt and Tunisia only the most recent; and a multiplicity of strategies available other than military intervention. ‘Nonviolent Peaceforce Canada’, Christian

Peacemaker Teams and other such initiatives are based on these strategies.

Peacekeeping, ideally...

Is it possible that some day we may have ‘a police force in town’ (Shabas, above) which protects all without discrimination? The International Criminal Court is a step in the right direction, if and when it can hold oppressors responsible. The rule of law internationally is definitely worth working for. Conscience Canada’s current position is that armed peacekeeping is acceptable under certain conditions: when training, organization and equipment are specific to peacekeeping

(not under a military umbrella), when it has civilian oversight and is applying the law, where every use of armed force must be justified and documented. However, when we look at the current state of the world, such a possibility seems far off.

Within CC, we believe we share in the “responsibility to protect”. We recognize that, as citizens, we are left with a choice to make: do we invest in military “security” or do we choose, instead, to invest in cultivating the power of non-violence? We choose the path of nonviolence.

By Don Woodside and Jan Slavkov, long time members of CC and its board

Conscience Canada

Membership Application / Renewal

Membership is open to any person committed to supporting Conscience Canada’s objectives.

People who have contributed to the Peace Tax Trust Fund are considered members of CC.. All “life memberships” dating from an earlier system are honoured. If you prefer NOT to be a member of CC kindly inform the office to remove your name.

Send in your new or renewed membership today. Address correction requested.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

The \$10.00 fee for membership is not required, but donations in support of CC operations would be greatly appreciated. Receipts will be issued for all donations.

Let us know if you would like to get involved in helping as a volunteer, or if you would like more (or fewer) copies of the newsletter, or if you would like other informational material.(specify or give purpose).

You may wish to join our email list online at: www.consciencecanada.ca

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