

# Work For Peace... Stop Paying For War

# Conscience Canada



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## News Notes



### A Season of Non-violence: 64 Ways for 64 Days

While home in her riding of Saanich-Gulf Islands, Elizabeth May was at educator & author Pummy Kaur's book launch, for her most recent book on nonviolence. There was discussion about shifting to more respectful relationships in politics and someone in the rooms

said, "Wouldn't it be great if every MP had a copy of *A Season of Non-Violence*?" Elizabeth thought that would be a great idea and suddenly everyone was chipping in and making pledges. Pummy's publisher offered a deep discount and soon each MP got a "Peace in Parliament" card explaining the book was a gift from her constituents as well as a third generation Conservative from Surrey. You can order copies of the book through this link: <http://www.rideauinstitute.ca/2011/08/15/author-pummy-kaur-finds-64-ways-for-64-days-to-promote-non-violence/>.

### Conrad Grebel given \$1 million for Peace Advancement

Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ontario, which has a strong Peace and Conflict Studies program, has been given \$1 million for the construction of a Centre for Peace Advancement.

This will give the University the opportunity to add an entire fourth floor above their current building

project. They are anticipating also adding a Master in Peace and Conflict Studies program, hopefully in September 2012. The donor of this largest gift in the College's history is the Mennonite Savings and Credit Union. It is a concrete demonstration of MSCU values of peace, social justice and mutual aid.

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### Alex Atamanenko Introduces New Military Tax Bill p.6



'May Peace Prevail on Earth'  
- Alex A. on Europe Asia  
Borderfor Peace, 2010

Top left: MP Elizabeth May, author Pummy Kaur, constituent Chris Dixon with some of the over 300 books - gifts to each MP.

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# CONSCIENCE CANADA (CC)

## 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

### OFFICIAL NOTICE

**Date and time: Saturday, 31 March, 2012 at 2 pm**

**Place: Friends House, 60 Lowther Ave., Toronto**

**Speaker: Jonathan Seiling, historian, on:**

***“1812 and the Early Rise of Conscientious Objection in Canada”***

**Agenda:**

- I. Approval of the Minutes of the 2011 AGM (available upon request)
- II. Review of the work done by Conscience Canada during the year;
- III. Election or confirmation of board members. The four officer positions required by our by-laws are: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, in addition there can be Board members at large. Standing for re- election are: Benno Barg, Bryan Eelhart, Mary Groh, Anna Kirkpatrick, Murray Lumley, Jan Slakov, Don Woodside. Standing for election: Eric Unger
- IV. Presentation and Approval of the 2011 financial statements - (available upon request)
- V. Appointment of auditors for 2012.
- VI. Other business
- VII. Talk by Jonathan Seiling: “1812 & the Early Rise of Conscientious Objection in Canada” (start time 3:30 pm)

All CC members and friends are warmly invited to attend the AGM.

The present AGM Notice, included in the newsletter and sent to all the members' address on record, constitutes the official notice, as required by the Conscience Canada Inc. by-laws. Please let us know if you want to receive a copy of the by-laws electronically or by mail.

If you cannot attend the meeting in person, do not forget to send your proxy below for your vote, either by post or by e-mail to: [info@consciencecanada.ca](mailto:info@consciencecanada.ca).

**I, (please print) \_\_\_\_\_**, a member in good standing of Conscience Canada, do hereby grant my proxy vote for the 31 March, 2012 Annual General Meeting of Conscience Canada to: \_\_\_\_\_ or in their absence to any Board Member of Conscience Canada.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Members write

**Dear Mr. Flaherty,** On May 18, 2010 I wrote a letter to you seeking assurance that none of the taxes I paid in the previous year would be used to support the Canadian Forces, or members of the Canadian Forces acting on behalf of the people of Canada, in the commission of unlawful acts. I subsequently received a letter from your office, dated June 4, 2010 acknowledging receipt of the May 18, letter with an explanation why Canadian taxpayers are obligated to pay the full amount of tax due, along with reasons why this is so.

I agree with your implication that it is reasonable for citizens to pay taxes, and I willingly do so. However, I am not willing to pay taxes that support criminal activities, and it is quite clear that Canadian Forces are involved in activities that violate the rule of law and are criminal. I have previously made reference to the murder by the Canadian Forces of Ahmed Aruush and Abdi Sabri, and Shidane Arone. I am perplexed by the continuing cover-up of the Afghan detainee issue, and the accusation of the Chief of Defense Staff and the Minister of Defense that honorable Canadians like Richard Colvin lied to Parliament. It is my duty as an involved and concerned citizen to protest these crimes and to call for Government accountability and transparency.

**Dave Hubert, Edmonton, AB**

**Freedom of conscience** is guaranteed under the “Charter of Rights and Freedoms.” I ask you to please support Private Member’s Bill C-460 [now C-363], “An Act respecting conscientious objection to the use of taxes for military purposes”. This kind of tax provision

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# Canada as Warrior or Peacemaker?

BY JAN SLAKOV

Interesting how what we remember affects who we become. For instance, if a person learns to replace a fixation on painful memories with happier memories, this can help lift the person out of depression.

Similarly, cultures evolve partly as a result of what they choose to remember. In recent years our government, with support from others, has made a concerted effort to glorify Canada's military past. Prime Minister Harper refers to Canada as a "courageous warrior" while under his leadership, military spending has doubled, to \$20 billion since 2004 and further large increases are projected.

The new citizenship guide for new Canadians presents Canada's military history in a laudatory light

and Citizenship and Immigration Canada has decreed that all citizenship ceremonies must include a military speaker, as an example of how Canadians can nobly serve their country.

Meanwhile, on Remembrance Day, Canadians are encouraged to show their gratitude to veterans who "fought for our freedom". The underlying assumptions that militarism is the only real way to fight for freedom or that our soldiers acted entirely nobly are generally left unquestioned.

Personally, I believe that, even now, the Canadian military shows greater respect for fundamental human rights than many other militaries, but I also think glorifying Canada's militaristic side is dangerous. In doing so, we undermine our

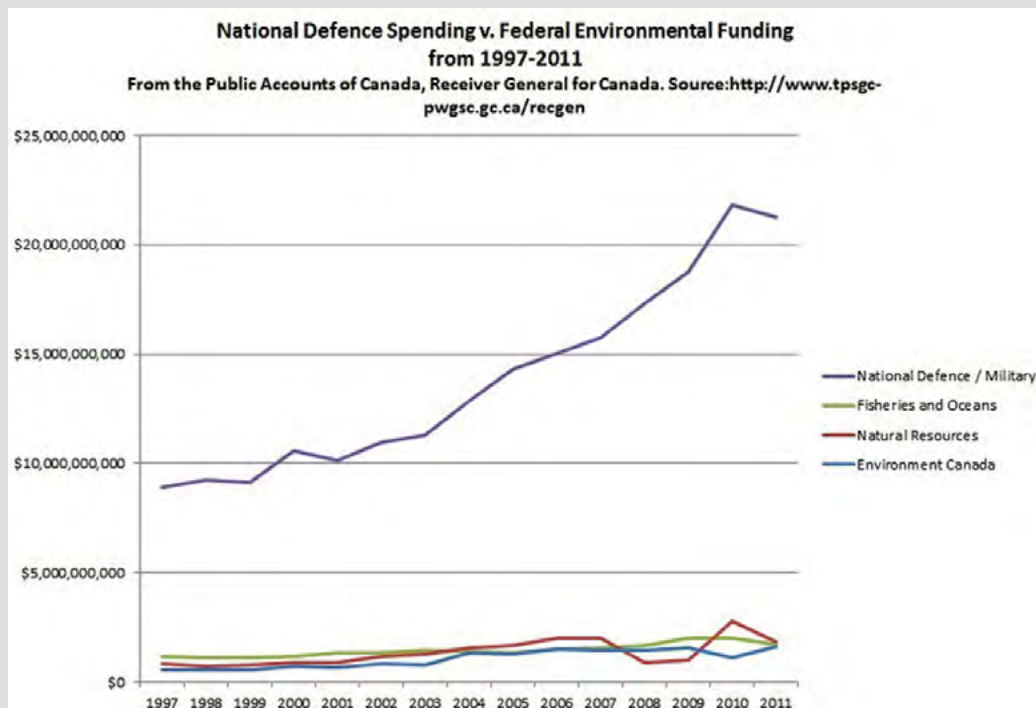
ability to struggle nonviolently to uphold our deepest values; we buy into a mindset that is ultimately suicidal in today's world.

We need to fundamentally rethink and change the way we live and how we strive to protect what we value. We can start by remembering other aspects of our history. The current government is spending \$11.5 million to commemorate the War of 1812. As Peter Shawn Taylor of Maclean's points out, this is part of the larger effort to resurrect the "importance of the military in everyday Canadian life". Former Conscience Canada board member, Jonathan Seiling, is researching the experiences of conscientious objectors during that war. As you can see in his article on p.2, their witness

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Peace activist Tamara Lorincz (MBA/LLB) has done some excellent research on the military industrial complex in Canada, including contributing to the discovery that the \$29 billion price tag for the F-35 fighter planes does not include the engines! At right is a graph she produced showing the startling increase in Canada's military spending vs. the stagnation in environmental spending. Source: The Public Accounts of Canada, Volume II: Details of Expenses and Revenues, Table 1: <http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/recgen/txt/72-eng.html>

Tamara's suggestions for effective ways to raise awareness about military spending include:



1) Participate in the Global Day of Action on Military Spending, April 17, 2012 [www.demilitarize.org](http://www.demilitarize.org)

2) Promote the Canadian Peace Alliance's Peace & Prosperity Campaign: [www.acp-cap.ca/en/PeaceandProsperity.html](http://www.acp-cap.ca/en/PeaceandProsperity.html)

# Divided Loyalties & Treason in 1812 and Today

**B**efore many of the historic peace church pioneers (Quakers, Brethren in Christ and Mennonites) were invited to settle in Upper Canada in the late 1700s and early 1800s, they were offered exemptions from militia duty because in principle they categorically refused to fight in war. Nevertheless, some of their compatriots considered them to be disloyal and even treasonous when war broke out in 1812.

Since breaking from the State-sponsored churches in their countries of origin, these peace church adherents had publicly declared their loyalty to a higher principle than that of nationhood. In 1812 such a declaration was not treasonous in Upper Canada; it was both a government-sanctioned right of conscience, and a higher principle for which the historic peace church adherents were willing to die.

## Privileges and Duties of Peace Churches in 1812

Although the right to conscientious objection was honoured, these historic peace churches were forced to pay a heavy militia tax and were conscripted in civilian duty. In addition they were required to allow the British army the use of their property and to provide lodging and meals upon request.

Often, conscientious objectors helped those who were hungry or needed shelter, regardless of national affiliation; some of them provided



Wagons like this were used by many of the peace church pioneers to migrate from Pennsylvania, and were later conscripted for use in alternative service. Photo courtesy of Jordan Historical Museum, Jordan, Ontario.

such assistance to troops on both sides of the war. They obeyed their religious convictions, that were based on many biblical passages which dictated that they would not resist requests for such help, even those of evil design. The clearest passage in the Sermon on the Mount reads:

*'do not resist evil persons; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to them also. If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let them have your coat also. Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with them two. Give to whomever asks of you.'* (Matt 5:39-42)

The issue of who deserved their ultimate loyalty was at the heart of their convictions. The charges of treason and cowardice remain indications that they were as misunderstood then as they and many others in the peace movement are today.

## Higher Principles & Conscience Today

In the same way that these historic peace church pioneers placed higher principles above that of the state, conscientious objectors of all stripes today place higher principles above that of national defense. The British tradition of protecting the right of conscientious objection is deeply engrained in our sense of nationhood and this is important to commemorate.

If our higher principle is to follow the path of peace, we have the privilege to give this principle our ultimate loyalty. Such an act of loyalty is neither treasonous nor cowardly. In an effort to protect the innocent victims of war, our higher principles may even move us to obstruct the militarism of our compatriots when their loyalty to the principle of national defense only increases suffering and diverts the efforts of those who are pursuing peace. When war ultimately benefits rich warhawks, who experience little pain but so much gain, while convincing others to sacrifice their lives, loyalty to higher principles than national defense in the larger-scale pursuit of peace is surely heroic.

**Jonathan Seiling is a historian and former board member of Conscience Canada.**

### Your reflections & comments are welcome on these sites!

- 'War Resistance in 1812' Blog: <http://warresistancein1812.blogspot.com/>
- Webpages commemorating historic peace church activities and resistance to the War of 1812: <http://ontario.mcc.org/warpeace-1812>

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## Peaceful Heroes & Artisans de la paix

While I (Jan Slakov) was in Ottawa last fall, I got to go to the national War Museum. While the displays did not delve into costs and causes of war, such as the role of the military industrial complex or the vast squandering of resources on war and militarism, there were a couple nice surprises. One was to find, in the museum boutique, a children's book with an image of a tank with poppies on its cover, entitled *Peaceful Heroes*.

This book is about "heroes who do not hurt people.... They would die for their cause, but they would not kill for their cause." It features a wide range of such heroes, including Jesus of Nazareth, Sojourner Truth, Corrie ten Boom, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Paul Rusesabagina (who protected people during the Rwanda

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reminds us that there are higher principles than those of the "patriotic initiatives" as promoted by Stephen Harper or the Bush administration.

James Moore, the federal heritage minister, argues, "This war [of 1812] leads directly to Confederation in 1867". But there are other roots to our national identity that we would do well to remember. Through his book, *Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine and Robert Baldwin*, John Ralston Saul describes how these two men worked together in what is sometimes called "the Great Ministry" to lay the foundations of Canadian democracy. In an interview on CBC's Power and Politics (Nov. 9,

genocide) and more. (NOTE: A much more extensive collection of nonviolent leaders, including several Canadians, can be found on the website of the Centre de ressources sur la nonviolence under "artisans de la paix".)

As you leave the museum, you are invited to reflect on how to prevent or bring an end to war, and there are postcards pre-addressed to elected representatives, the War Museum and at least one peace group for people to use to send in their suggestions.

The museum is preparing a display on peace-building for 2013. I am sure staff would be receptive to ideas...

I also got to meet with the new NDP Foreign Affairs critic, former foreign service officer H el ene Laverdi ere and her assistant. They seemed genuinely receptive to the Department of Peace idea and are trying to build on the unanimous motion in support of global nuclear weapons abolition.

2010), he argues that "Canada was created intellectually, intentionally, emotionally on purpose, to be a place of restraint. [...This] meant that not just French and English could live together, but all sorts of people could live together." As with many stories of nonviolence, this one is complex and rich, well worth looking into. The way these reformers, anchored in a friendship that crossed linguistic and religious divides, refused to fight violence with violence and worked together to build institutions that promoted justice, education and good governance has much to teach us about moving forward in today's political context.

**Jan Slakov edits the CC newsletter.**

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is needed in order for Canada to respect its commitment to freedom of conscience.

Please know also that my convictions in this matter are deeply rooted in my commitment to Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

**H.M. Sawadsky, Vineland, ON**

**I write on this day**, the opening day of the CANSEC Arms Bazaar in Ottawa.

This annual welcoming of the rich and powerful to view and purchase weapons of mass destruction is a black blot on Canadian governance, and a straight negation of all rhetoric about peace in any context.

Freedom, justice, equality and democracy are denied with each glossy machine produced to kill. And the only winners are their producers and the middlemen.

**Eileen Wttewaall  
Salt Spring Island BC**

**An editorial**, published in the Dec. 1 Nelson Star, in BC, argued that: "Earlier this week our representative in Ottawa put forward a private member's bill that might win him some fans, but in reality it's not a very good idea at all. NDP MP Alex Atamanenko wants to give conscientious objectors the right to prevent their tax dollars from going to the military."

Several good letters were printed in response, including one by Irene Mock. Here is an excerpt:

*There are also Canadian precedents for recognizing conscientious objections to paying for the military. For example, in 1841, objectors to militia tax were allowed to redirect these taxes to public works. In both world wars, objectors to war bonds were allowed to buy a special series of government bonds (peace bonds) whose proceeds were used only for*

## Alex Atamanenko introduces Bill C-363

Conscience Canada is very pleased that Alex Atamanenko was able to introduce Bill C-363, An Act respecting conscientious objection to the use of taxes for military purposes. Below is part of his statement:

“For those who believe we are all responsible for our nation’s military actions and role in the world, this right is fundamental.”

“I am honoured to have the opportunity to continue the work begun by my retired NDP colleague Bill Siksay, who authored the original bill. Thanks to Anna Kirkpatrick and Conscience Canada for the valuable input they provided to strengthen Bill C-363.”

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*the relief of suffering caused by war:*

*Since modern wars are hugely dependent on tax monies, personal refusal to fight is not enough to absolve us from the responsibility of killing.*

*In fact, in 1981, Senator Eugene Forsey and six other MPs said, “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 taxes intended for war preparation and a related alternative should be offered.” Our Charter of Rights enshrined freedom of conscience based on secular morality as well as religion the following year.*

## 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](http://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

# Conscience Canada

## Membership application / renewal

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

Address correction requested.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

There is no membership fee but donations in support of CC operations would be greatly appreciated. Receipts will be issued for all donations. Persons completing this membership application will receive membership privileges indefinitely unless removal from our mailing list is requested.

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. NOTE: We have class sets of a zine and other student-friendly materials.

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**CC NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION IS MAINLY ONLINE!**

Unless we hear otherwise, we will send the newsletter out via email to all members who have email addresses and we will not be sending out paper copies unless a request is made for those.

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