

# Work For Peace... Stop Paying For War

## **Conscience Canada**

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# Solidarity - In War, In Peace

BY JAN SLAKOV

A good friend sent me the link to a Bill Moyers interview with Karl Marlantes, who speaks about his experience of *What It's Like to Go to War* (also explored in his book by that title). Such a thought-provoking interview! You can find it at: <http://billmoyers.com/segment/karl-marlantes-on-what-its-like-to-go-to-war/>.

For members of Conscience Canada, surely the most relevant part is when Marlantes explains that it is not just soldiers, but the whole of society which is involved in war, including voters and politicians, taxpayers, arms makers and investors. The young soldier is like the arrowhead who has to deliver all the evil, personally, and suffers most acutely for it, while most of the rest of society hardly feels that they are participating in any evil at all.

This may explain why it is so difficult to recruit more conscientious objectors to military taxation.

I would suggest that there is a strange bond that links soldiers and conscientious objectors. Marlantes explains, "You take a young man and put him in the role of God, where he is asked to take a life — that's something no 19-year-old is



Bill Moyers (left) interview with Karl Marlantes (right)

able to handle." Conscientious objectors also suffer from war, without actually engaging in it directly, as they feel the weight of responsibility for the killing. And many are challenged by their commitment to nonviolence to address situations of injustice with the power of nonviolence. While engaging in that struggle can be greatly rewarding, it can also be very taxing, and sometimes even deadly.

Conscientious objectors and soldiers often share something else: a sense of solidarity from being part of a group that is sharing profound life experiences together. I have found that, despite real differences between individual conscientious

objectors I have worked with in Conscience Canada, despite even hardly ever getting to meet with others on the board, I have been amazed to see how deep our con-

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## News Notes



Victoria Harbour. Photo by Din

### Victoria Votes to Endorse Dept. of Peace

At the invitation of the Canadian Department of Peace Initiative Victoria City Council voted to endorse the proposal for a federal Department of Peace. Hopefully supporters in other municipalities will ask their

councils to pass similar resolutions. For more info (including a sample resolution) write to [info@consciencecanada.ca](mailto:info@consciencecanada.ca).

## Peace Events Coming Up

**International Day of Peace**, Sept. 21 - Int'l. Day of Nonviolence, Oct. 2

**The 2012 Peace Day Global Broadcast**, Sept. 20th to Sept. 23rd will feature concerts from Australia, Nepal, Africa, Europe, the United States and South America. Partners include Mayors For Peace,

International Rotary, Pathways To Peace, The Culture of Peace Initiative, Unity Foundation, World Peace Prayer Society, International Cities of Peace, Peace Day LIVE, and many more. It's available on over 1,000 websites; and was viewed by millions of people last year. [www.peaceday.tv](http://www.peaceday.tv)

### The Ottawa Peace Festival

includes over 15 events: <http://ottawapeacefestival.blogspot.ca/> There will also be a Fast & Vigil for Climate Justice at that time. More info: <http://www.climatefast.ca> or contact: [lyn.adamson9@gmail.com](mailto:lyn.adamson9@gmail.com), (416) 731-6605

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nections seem to be. We have not relied on each other for our bodily survival, but maybe we have relied on each other for some spiritual sustenance; in any case, the friendships are profound.

And so I come to thank a dear, dear friend, Bruna Nota, for all she has done for Conscience Canada. In 2002 Conscience Canada was in the process of being shut down, when Bruna rallied others and together we saved it from an impending death. For years she guided the new board through a series of projects; much work got done then that is still of use for CC today. Then life circumstances obliged Bruna to step down from the board, but still it was her address that served as the CC "office" address.

Now Bruna and her husband Ian,

who also helped CC over the years, are moving into a retirement home and our treasurer, Dave Bechtel, has offered his address as our new "office", a true gift for us all.

Bruna deserves some respite, for sure... but it so happens that the retirement home they are moving to is also home to other thinker-activists, including members of CC, and I am hopeful that, after a time, the respite will free Bruna up so she will be able to offer her wisdom and caring to the wider community, including CC, once again.

Although I have been speaking as an individual, I know others share my gratitude for all Bruna has done for CC, but especially for simply being the person she is.

**By Jan Slakov, who trusts she will still feel connected to other COs, even when, one day, she steps down from the board.**

## 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

Dave Bechtel, Mary Groh, Anna Kirkpatrick, Murray Lumley, Jan Slakov, Dwight Sullivan, Don Woodside, Eric Unger

# 1812 Bicentennial Peace Committee

BY DON WOODSIDE

The Harper government is spending millions of dollars, more than what it saved by cutting both Katimavik and its support for the Canadian Environmental Network, to commemorate and celebrate the war of 1812 as crucial to the founding of Canada.

There has been a lot of newspaper and TV coverage of the war, and of special events, most of it supporting the government view of a necessary and glorious war. In 2012 a committee of historic peace churches (Mennonite, Quaker, and Brethren in Christ) formed the “1812 Bicentennial Peace Committee” to honour those who refused to fight in that war. The committee has placed four plaques in the region.

An unveiling was held in June attended by about 50 people, with a write-up in the Port Colbourne paper, and a successful bike tour of the sites took place in late July. There is a webpage and blog on the Mennonite Central Committee of Ontario (MCCO) website.

There are plans for school curricula. The inspiration for the committee has been Jonathan Seiling, former board member of Conscience Canada. He is finishing a short book on experiences of individuals and families during the war drawn from original archives, has made more than a dozen public presentations on the subject, and has published a children’s book. The committee also gave a workshop at the Active History academic conference titled ‘Whose War Was It Anyway?’ in May. We were privileged to hear Jamie Swift (author of Warrior Nation) and others, including U.S. and



Still image take from the recent The Fight for Canada - War of 1812 (200th Anniversary) commercial advertisement

First Nations historians, at a public forum that evening.

Glorifying the War of 1812 is part of the government’s promotion of the military as the linchpin of Canadian society and the source of our democratic freedoms. This is ironic, as the War of 1812 was at least in part motivated by the British Empire’s continuing attempts to undermine the new democracy to our south. The Empire’s success in

this war was due less to local militias, who had a high rate of AWOLs (time to go home and look after the farm) than to the imperial army and its First Nations allies – whom they proceeded to betray after the war ended. And one outcome was decades of autocratic rule by the Family Compact in Upper Canada.

**Don Woodside is a long time peace tax truster.**

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## Members Write

Dear Mr. Flaherty,

I am opposed to war and take seriously Jesus’ commandment “Do not kill”. Several times I have served as a delegate with the Christian Peacemaker Teams in areas of violence – to reduce the violence by our presence, unarmed.

I am unable in good conscience to pay taxes which support war and the preparations for war. I know that Canada has respected conscientious objection to bearing arms

for over two hundred years. But, as you and I know, in this time of high-tech warfare, governments need to conscript our money, not our bodies.

[...]

Canada used to be known as a peace-making country instead of the killing machine that General Hillier brags about. As you well know, our international reputa-

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# Excerpts from Eric Unger's letter to PM Harper, Finance Minister Flaherty and his MP

**Dear Mr Harper, Mr Flaherty,  
and Mr Bruinooge,**

As the violent and tragic events unfold in Syria, I am reminded again of the results of instructing men in the ways of killing. Can we learn anything from these events? It is quite possible, and even logical, to expect that some day, unless we carefully consider and learn from them today, such horrific events will take place within our own borders. As military experts provide overseas instruction and guidance in how to interrogate, torture, and kill fellow human beings, only the blind cannot see that the results of our labours may someday return to haunt us, perhaps repaying us many times over. And who will take the responsibility for such short-sightedness?

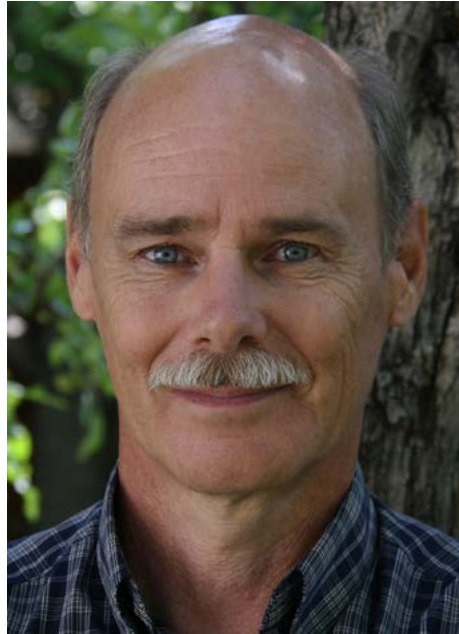
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**“Can anything be more stupid than that a man has the right to kill me because he lives on the other side of a river and his ruler has a quarrel with mine, though I have not quarreled with him?”**

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[...]  
My Earnest Plea for a Peace Tax Fund

[...]  
My perception of war as a sensible means of human interaction can be summed up in a quote from Blaise Pascal, who was not only a very logical thinker, but also a person of



Eric Unger

deep faith:

Can anything be more stupid than that a man has the right to kill me because he lives on the other side of a river and his ruler has a quarrel with mine, though I have not quarreled with him?

I fully understand that there are those whose hopes and aspirations are closely connected to conquest and battle, and who hold other points of view. But I submit my plea on behalf of those who believe as I do, that war is NOT the solution to international disputes.

[Eric included seven quotes from well-known historical figures, to support his position and asked, “With which of these voices would you disagree?” To see the whole letter, please visit our website: [www.consciencecanada.ca](http://www.consciencecanada.ca) ) We have space for one of those excellent quotes, below.]

*An army exists to kill men, when ordered, in the nation's quarrel, irrespective of its justice. It should train its men to a single end. If we object to any of our citizens thus specializing on murderous and unchristian activities, we should abolish the army. If we want an army, we should recognize it for what it is. We should not tell lies about its being a school of citizenship or manual training.*

– An army officer,  
Christian Century, March 11, 1926

**Eric Unger is a part-time high-school teacher in southern Manitoba. He has lived and worked in Germany and France, and raised his children in West and East Africa while pretending to be a secondary high school mathematics teacher. (What he really wanted was an excuse to cycle year round in temperatures significantly warmer than those in Winnipeg, where he now resides.) He votes Green whenever he can. As a new member of the board of Conscience Canada, he continues to send letters to Prime Minister Harper and associates, encouraging them to always act with wisdom, integrity and courage. He is active in a small Mennonite church congregation south of the city and is a firm believer in the health benefits of a less military (though not necessarily military-less) world, and also of climbing the Rockies of southern Alberta with family members.**

# Money Matters

Conscience Canada relies entirely on financial contributions from supporters, as well as on the work of a corps of volunteer board members to carry on its operations. The moral support of newsletter readers is also vital, but you may wish to also make a tangible contribution to the organization. Small donations from many people would be very helpful. Until a couple of years ago, many of you will recall, there was a \$10.00 annual membership fee. Since then we have been managing without that hassle, but receipts dropped last year, so it seems that a timely reminder is in order to replenish our treasury.

Send a donation if you can to our treasurer, Dave Bechtel, at 8 Chandos Drive, Kitchener, ON. N3A 3C2 or use PayPal to donate on-line.

And thank you.

# Books and Other Resources for Peace

BY JAN SLAKOV

Is there anything that could bring an end to the increasing militarization of Canada? Writing in Peace Magazine, Ken Simons suggests that the pro-military agenda, which tends to attack opponents and foster polarization, could antagonize so many Canadians, that there will, once again, be “space for a civil and peace-oriented discourse in Canadian public life”. However, as things stand, the traditional Canadian inclination towards fairness, restraint and peace-building is being devalued while war-fighting is being promoted as central

to the Canadian identity.

In his review of Warrior Nation: Re-branding Canada in an Age of Anxiety, Simons cites several examples of how this shift is occurring. “Remembrance Day [...] has been reborn as a quasi-compulsory annual celebration of Our Brave Soldiers, while veterans are denied benefits, military whistleblowers see their personal details leaked to the media, and the dead are blamed for their own deaths” (cf. when Canadian Forces Major Paeta Hess-von Kruedener was killed at

Books continued on p.7

## Statement of Receipts and Disbursements for period ended Aug. 31, 2012

	Fiscal Year to Aug 31/12		Fiscal Year to Aug 31/11		2012
	Operating	Trust Funds	Operating	Trust Funds	Proposed Operating Budget
<b>Receipts</b>					
Peace Tax Deposits Received		9,223.30		10,945.26	
Donations	1,278.55		7,422.47		5,000.00
Interest and Other Receipts	578.35		1,252.26		750.00
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>1,856.90</b>	<b>9,223.30</b>	<b>8,674.73</b>	<b>10,945.26</b>	<b>5,750.00</b>
<b>Disbursements</b>					
Peace Tax Deposits Refunded		9,444.11		14,199.75	
Newsletter	982.39		2,339.25		3,000.00
Outreach	140.97		2,291.23		2,400.00
Advertising	1,803.07		1,970.26		2,000.00
Website	135.25		121.70		150.00
Professional Services	195.00		1,177.00		1,695.00
Directors and Officers Liability Insurance	918.00		918.00		918.00
Administration	231.13		766.61		1,000.00
Donations to Sister Organizations	100.00		300.00		300.00
<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>4,505.81</b>	<b>9,444.11</b>	<b>9,884.05</b>	<b>14,199.75</b>	<b>11,463.00</b>
<b>Excess (Deficiency) of Receipts Over Disbursements</b>	<b>(2,648.91)</b>	<b>(220.81)</b>	<b>(1,209.32)</b>	<b>(3,254.49)</b>	<b>(5,713.00)</b>

# Conscience Canada endorses BlackOutSpeakOut action

On Monday, June 4, many civil society groups across Canada protested the proposed federal budget of 2012 by shutting down their websites for one day and redirecting visitors to the “BlackOutSpeakOut” site. We feel it is important that Canadians act to encourage our government to withdraw proposed provisions in Bill C-38, the Budget Implementation Act, which would radically alter or remove environmental and social protections that generations of Canadians have worked hard to develop. These include:

- The Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act, National
- Round Table on the Environment and the Economy Act, and the Fair Wages and Hours
- Labour Act; repealing and replacing the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act; and altering many core provisions of other laws such as the: Fisheries Act, Navigable Waters Protection Act, National Energy Board Act, Species at Risk Act, Parks Canada Agency Act, Canadian Oil and Gas Operations Act, Nuclear Safety Control Act, Canada Seeds Act, Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

Why would Conscience Canada, given our limited mandate, join in this action? Not only do members of Conscience Canada object to war and militarism, we also support acting nonviolently for peace and justice. Conscience Canada is a member group of the Voices-Voix coalition; we agree with them that it is important to “stand for democracy and the right of all voices to be heard”.

## Conscience Canada

### Membership application / renewal

**Membership is open to any person committed to supporting Conscience Canada's objectives**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**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.

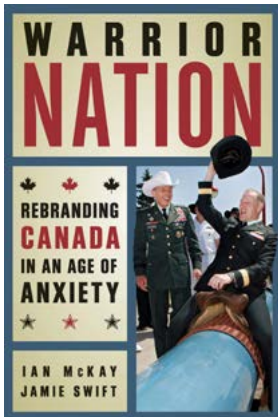
Let us know if you would like to get involved in helping as a volunteer, or if you would like more (or fewer) copies of the newsletter, or if you would like other informational material. NOTE: We have class sets of a zine and other student-friendly materials. -

**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.

Mail to: Conscience Canada, 8 Chandos Dr., Kitchener, ON N2A 3C2 or [info@consciencecanada.ca](mailto:info@consciencecanada.ca)

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Cover of **Warrior Nation**: General Walter Natynczyk, right, Canada's Chief of Defence Staff, rides a torpedo and General David Petraeus, Commander of US CENTCOM, watches as the pair tour a Canadian military display at the Calgary Stampede, July 3, 2009

his UN observation post in Lebanon, Prime Minister Harper suggested the UN observers should have withdrawn as soon as Israel started shelling - an observation "that made little military sense".)

Briony Penn (naturalist, journalist, artist, educator and more!) wrote about this shift as well, in her article "May Day, m'aidez". She cites defence policy journalist David Pugliese, who describes the ideological changes in defence policy as "unbelievable", "with unprecedented and undebated increases in spending, marching hand in hand with unprecedented cuts to the environment. (It turns out that the 10 percent cutback to the defense budget was mostly spin, and mostly directed at programs like care for traumatized soldiers.)" She also describes how her son got a first hand look at what could be considered a pro-war propaganda program for youth, sponsored by the federal government. He was "flown to Ottawa, housed, fed, lectured to and trotted around the capital's institutions and memorials devoted to war [and]... given a taste of institutional life—junk food, videos and confine-

ment. In between visits to war exhibits and memorials, they are lectured on war."

Warrior Nation authors Ian McKay and Jamie Swift cite numerous other examples of how the "New Warrior" mentality leads to unwise or unethical acts. For instance, in the new citizenship guide, Discover Canada: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship (2009), former governor general John Buchan is depicted in a laudatory light, complete with a photo of him in a Kainai First Nation headdress. Now, of course, we would see such a photo as an example of illegitimate usurpation of First Nations heritage. Furthermore, it turns out that this John Buchan had some very racist views and even ran "racially segregated concentration camps" during the Boer War.

Koozma Tarasoff has pointed out, in his review of *Warrior Nation*, that glorifying war and attacking traditional Canadian values of multiculturalism, democracy and a strong social safety net go hand in hand. He urges us to support the Canadian Department of Peace Initiative, which builds on an understanding of peace as rooted in the struggle for justice and a vision that embraces complexity, rather than dividing the world into "us" versus "them".

Reflecting on these ideas, I was reminded of what John Ralston Saul wrote about a the way Canadians have traditionally approached war, described in his chapter on "Anti-Heroism" in *Reflections of a Siamese Twin*. Canadians, he argues, have traditionally seen war-fighting as a necessary but very unglorious evil.

This is not, of course, the way most members of Conscience Canada see war. We can recognize that war-fighting is indeed a part of human history,



Briony Penn: naturalist, journalist, artist, educator & more

but we believe it is not necessary to engage in war and war preparations to stand up for what is right and we insist on our right to invest in the power of non-violence, rather than be obliged to invest in militarism.

"Investing in the power of non-violence": that is, I believe, a key reason why I continue to volunteer with Conscience Canada. If all we did was criticize war and militarism, I would eventually lose interest. But within the board I find a kind of support group for exploring the power of non-violence. Ours is a group for "active pacifists" to use a term coined by Marion Kerans in describing Muriel Duckworth.

Turning around the increasing militarization of Canada is certainly a daunting challenge. But with books like *Warrior Nation* or Noah Richler's *What We Talk About When We Talk About War*, as well as some excellent articles such as the one cited above, by Briony Penn, we have some good tools for getting the work done.

Perhaps you have come across some good resources for promoting more peace-oriented contributions from Canada. If so, let us know about them so hopefully in our next newsletter we can share some of these resources and ideas.

**Members Write continued**

tion has plummeted as we have decreased our peace-keepers and increased our war machine.

[...]

**Sincerely,  
Dr. Dwyer Sullivan  
Kitchener, ON**

I especially object to your government's refusal to disclose the costs of the planned fighter jet purchase, and your failure to adhere to the regular tendering process for this contract. Your government's lack of transparency on this file and your apparent contempt for democratic process and the right of Canadians to know how (and how many of) their tax dollars are being spent is very troubling, and confirms my instinct that my tax dollars would be better directed towards development and peace initiatives, rather than military ones. I look forward to the day when I won't have to write you a letter about this every year, and can direct my tax dollars to be spent on non-military initiatives by simply checking off a box on my tax return.

**Anonymous**

M. l'honorable Ted Menzies,

Je favorise la mission pacificatrice du Canada et je regrette que mon pays ne soit plus le leader dans le maintien de la paix à travers le monde. Investir dans la paix est plus sécuritaire et enrichissant qu'investir dans l'armement qui est conçu pour détruire ou terroriser. Pensons à nos descendants qui risquent de subir le contrecoup de nos actions belliqueuses d'aujourd'hui.

La diplomatie est plus lente mais plus convaincante à la longue parce qu'on ne donne pas raison à nos opposants de nous attaquer.

C'est pourquoi j'appuie Conscience Canada dont je viens d'apprendre l'existence récemment.

Veillez agréer l'expression de mes meilleurs sentiments.

**Francine Dumais  
Rimouski, QC**

Dear Mr. Flaherty,

I would hope you would agree with the Nuremberg principle which essentially states that it is not an acceptable excuse for someone to say they were just following orders.

For many people, it is morally abhorrent to kill others, even if governments assure them that most of those being killed are "enemies". It is perhaps even more objectionable to pay someone else to do the killing.

[...]

I agree with the late Edith Adamson, founder of Conscience Canada, when she pointed out that: "War now depends more on money than on personnel; it only took twelve men to drop the bomb over Hiroshima, but it took millions, perhaps billions, of taxpayers' dollars in Canada, Britain and the United States to develop that bomb."

[...]

Please reply to my letter to let me know what, if anything, you will do to respect the rights of conscientious objectors to military taxation.

**Sincerely,  
Jan Slakov  
Salt Spring Island, BC**

For a number of years, I sent letters to the gov't and withheld a portion of my taxes, putting them into a separate bank account. In the end, the CRA froze my accounts at the Mennonite Savings and Credit Union and then took the amount "owed" from that account. I refused to voluntarily relinquish the dollars, essentially forcing them to either change the law or take it from me forcefully. They chose the latter, of course.

If a lot of people did that, then perhaps it would be enough of a hassle that it would be cheaper for them to just provide a legal option than to try to collect all of the withheld dollars...

**Peace,  
Nolan Andres  
Founder and CEO, PeaceWorks  
Computer Consulting Inc.  
Waterloo, ON**

Dear Minister Flaherty:

I am a conscientious objector to war and object to being forced to support war by the conscription of my taxes. Under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms I request that none of my taxes be used for war. I request that legislation be enacted to create a government controlled Peace Fund for non-military peace-building purposes to which the military portion of my taxes can be diverted.

Let's be creative and find better ways than the military to communicate with other nations.

**Yours truly,  
Anne Caza  
Ottawa, ON**