

Work For Peace... Stop Paying For War

Conscience Canada

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Fall 2014 Number 107

Issn 1196-9970

Letters: Changing Our Minds for Peace

One of the main tools Conscience Canada members use is letter-writing. Some might dismiss it as too ineffective but I [Jan] think it is of vital importance. In writing letters, we don't just educate others, we educate ourselves. As the UNESCO constitution asserts, "wars begin in the minds of men [sic]"; in writing our letters we work to change our minds.

Below is a very powerful letter from Dave Hubert, author of *Canada @ Peace: Coactive Security*. It reminds elected officials that they are responsible to uphold the rule of law, as are all of us.



Dave Hubert in 2012, when he received an honorary doctorate from St. Stephens College, Edmonton.

May 18, 2014
Hon. Joe Oliver
Minister of Finance
Government of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Oliver,
Subject: Rule of law

I have written to your predecessors—John Manley, Ralph Goodale, and James Flaherty—regarding using my taxes for purposes that are contrary to the rule of law. I have asked them to submit to a court of law the question of me

being complicit in a serious breach of law, like murder, if some of my taxes have been used in the commission of this murder. In a larger sense, I am asking if the Government of Canada and all of its officers, both elected and unelected, and all its branches and agencies, are bound by the rule of law. It is my contention that they are, for the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states unequivocally that "Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law." Further, it is my understanding that when

the Prime Minister or any Minister of the Crown is sworn in, he or she makes a solemn oath on the Bible to uphold the rule of law.

In my previous correspondence with your predecessors questions about criminality within the Canadian Armed Forces have been raised—criminality like the murders of Ahmed Arush, Abdi Sabrie and Shidane Arone in Somalia; turning prisoners over to be tortured in Afghanistan; and, as part of and in support of NATO, killing civilians in Afghanistan with drones, among other examples cited over the years.

The title of the lead article in the May 5, 2014 edition of Maclean's is "Our Military's Disgrace." It describes the sexual assaults that continue to characterize Canada's armed forces and the complacency of the chain-of-command to these criminal activities. [...]

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News Notes

William Rivers Pitt: President's moral authority crumbles

In his article, "The Dumpster Fire of Obama's Moral Authority", Pitt writes: "What took place during the long, gruesome practice of torture is a stain on the soul of this nation. President Obama has done nothing to bring those responsible to justice, and has in fact tapped several of the architects, [...] for positions of incredible power. On Friday, Mr. Obama chose to soft-pedal the disgrace of torture, called the perpetrators "patriots," and told those of us upset about the whole thing not to be "sanctimonious" in our indignation. The presidency of Barack Obama ended on Friday, August 1st, 2014, as far as I am concerned."

Huge Victory: Lockheed Martin (weapons, surveil- lance, war) is OUT of the Canadian census

Sandra Finley, one of many who refused to fill out her census on grounds of conscience, reports:

"It has taken ten years. Lockheed Martin Corp is OUT of the Canadian Census and Statistics operation. A huge number of Canadians, most of them anonymous, are to thank.

The main tool was "spreading the word" through community grapevines – electronic media but also conversations with friends. Ultimately, that is what counted – the formation of a critical mass of citizens who know about Lockheed Martin."

With a non-compliance rate of 11% and three prosecutions against citizens who refused to fill out their

census form, Sandra is convinced that it was the actions of conscientious objectors which caused StatsCan to free itself of any connection to Lockheed Martin.

To find out more about Lockheed Martin and other weapons peddlers, Sandra recommends the Youtube video, [The Business of War: SO-FEX](#).



PeaceQuest invitation

PeaceQuest, an open, public and non-partisan movement, invites Canadians to join the dialogue they have started "about our country's role in peacemaking, reconciliation and social justice".

This effort comes as we commemorate "the war to end all wars" and as we approach Canada's 150th year as a nation. The founders hope that Canadians will be inspired to undertake PeaceQuest initiatives in their communities between now and 2017.

Intersections on conscien- tious objection coming up

CC President Mary Groh has been invited to write an article about her path to conscientious objection to military taxation for the winter, 2015, issue of the Mennonite Central Committee's publication, *Intersections*. The issue will focus on the theme of conscientious objection and will be available online and in print.

On conscientious objection in Canada

The Spring, 2014 issue of Quaker Concern includes an article about

new U.N. guidelines on conscientious objection. It explains:

"In Canada, soldiers seeking discharge must have a sincerely held objection to participating in war or armed conflict in general, or the bearing and use of arms as a requirement of service. Objection to a particular conflict or operation or on the basis of national policy, personal expediency, or political beliefs are not recognized grounds for release.

CFSC welcomed this Canadian policy development in 2004, however, we were concerned that it fell short of emerging international standards. Although international

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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

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

Letters continued

I look forward to getting this matter resolved with assurances by a court of law stating unequivocally that Canada is a country governed by the rule of law, and that all Canadians, the Government of Canada, and all branches of the Government of Canada, including the Prime Minister, the PMO, the Minister and Department of Defense and the Canadian Forces, CSIS, and the RCMP, are subject to the rule of law.

Finally, I urge your Government to support the re-introduction of Private Members Bill C-363, "An Act Respecting Conscientious Objection to the Use of Taxes for Military Purposes," and the passage of Bill C-373—An Act to Establish the Department of Peace. While the passage of these bills will not ensure that the Canadian Forces will not commit acts that are contrary to the rule of law, nor absolve the Government of Canada of criminal acts committed by the Canadian Forces, it will assure persons of conscience in Canada that their taxes will not be used to support the commission of crimes and violations of the rule of law by the Canadian Forces and give these taxpayers comfort that their taxes will be used for positive, constructive purposes rather than activities that engender hate and lead to further conflict, death and destruction.

Yours truly,
Dave Hubert

cc.

Mike Lake - MP Edmonton Beaumont, Stephen Harper, Thomas Mulcair, Justin Trudeau, Elizabeth May, Ryan Penner, Conscience Canada

Murray Lumley to our Minister of Finance

Dear Minister Oliver,

Thank you for your reply (on paper) to my letter to you of April 30, 2014 in which I asked your government to support a bill similar to Private Member's Bill C-363 (2011), an Act respecting Conscientious Objection to the use of taxes for military purposes, which would allow me to direct that all my taxes be spent only for peaceful purposes.

In your letter you said, in part, "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 about which programs and services to fund (or not to fund) ... 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 more difficult to plan and deliver those services effectively." My argument has nothing to do with wealth producing power; wealth already does lead to power. My argument is about how one's conscience directs the spending of one's resources. In the past it was our bodies that were conscripted for war, but modern wars are fought largely with very expensive machines directed by a few professional military personnel. (Just think of the cost of the F-35 jets your government is still considering buying. The expenditure being considered for these machines

could pay for the transit needs of all of the major cities of Canada with money left over for affordable housing for all plus universal daycare.)

An additional argument I offer and perhaps the strongest one, is that there is a history and tradition in Canada (and elsewhere) that allows Conscientious Objectors to opt out of war service on the basis of freedom of religion and conscience. I direct you to *A Brief History of Conscientious Objection in Canada* [on the CC website]. Finally I refer you to a quote by former European Commander in WWII and President of the United States, Dwight Eisenhower, "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. This is not a way of life at all in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron." - from a speech before the American Society of Newspaper Editors, April 16, 1953



Dwight Eisenhower

Financial update & Thank You

The Board would like to thank our generous donors, who help keep Conscience Canada going. We would also like to invite you to get involved in whatever way suits your gifts and availability. Some suggestions for involvement:

- helping to keep our Facebook page interesting & up to date
- writing letters and articles, as well as letters-to-the-editor
- outreach and follow up to member inquiries
- setting up displays at venues in your region (We can send you outreach materials.)
- newsletter editing

Jan would like to add a personal thank you: With all the various issues that need attention in our time, it's not always easy to find time for Conscience Canada. But I feel that I have received a great education in nonviolence through my interactions with Conscience Canada members, going back to the questions I sent along to Edith Adamson back in the '80s. Now, 30 years later, I can see how that education has helped me deal with some difficult situations in my life, in my community. We can foster a culture of peace through civil society groups like ours. The cost of this education is paid by the donors and volunteers who keep our groups going, so, THANK YOU once again.

Conscience Canada Balance Sheet As of July 31, 2014

	July 31, 2014	
	Operating	Trust Funds
Assets		
Chequing & Savings Accounts	23,146.03	63,004.61
Accrued Revenue	-	
Investments		-
Total Assets	23,146.03	63,004.61
Liabilities		
Accts. Payable & Accrued Lia.	-	
Legal Fund	5,102.27	
Funds Held In Trust		63,004.61
Total Liabilities	5,102.27	63,004.61
Fund Balance		
Fund Balance - Opening	22,126.75	55,636.50
Excess (Deficiency) of Receipts Over Disbursements	(4,082.99)	7,368.11
Net Fund Balance	18,043.76	63,004.61

Conscience Canada Statement of Receipts and Disbursements For Period Ended July 31, 2014

	Actual	
	Fiscal Year to July 31/14	
	Operating	Trust Funds
Receipts		
Peace Tax Deposits Received		7,699.49
Donations	1,540.94	
Interest and Other Receipts	184.45	
Total Receipts	1,725.39	7,699.49
Disbursements		
Peace Tax Deposits Refunded		331.38
Newsletter	1,505.23	
Special Projects (CPTI Conference)	-	
Outreach	124.05	
Advertising	2,649.74	
Website	20.53	
Professional Services	79.75	
Directors and Officers Liability Insurance	981.72	
Administration	447.36	
Donations to Sister Organizations	-	
Total Disbursements	5,808.38	331.38
Excess (Deficiency) of Receipts Over Disbursements	(4,082.99)	7,368.11

News Notes continued

bodies recognize a soldier's right to selective objection, the Canadian process does not. Moreover, C.O. applications should be processed by an independent body, not a soldier's commanding officer (who can have vested interests in the decision). The U.S. has a similar system. While Canada's system has been responsive despite its flaws, the story is very different in the U.S. where genuine C.O.s frequently have their applications denied and are sometimes subjected to punishment."

Protestor Imprisoned

This summer Mary Anne Grady Flores was sentenced to a year in prison as a result of her ongoing protests against drone warfare which is being used to carry out US assassination orders and resulting in substantial "collateral damage". She has violated a "protection order" (normally used in domestic violence situations and the like) which had been issued to "protect" the mission support commander at Hancock air base, who wanted to keep protesters "out of his driveway".

Mary Anne began her sentencing statement with, "Your honor, a series of judicial perversions brings me here before you tonight." She concluded that, the "final perversion is the reversal of who is the real victim here: the commander of a military base whose drones kill innocent people halfway around the world, or those innocent people themselves who are the real ones in need of protection from the terror of U.S. drone attacks?"



Mary Anne Grady Flores

CC board member Eric Unger was shocked by this judgement and wrote to President Obama. His letter cuts through the layers of judicial proceedings, asking, "What will you do, Mr. President, to see that Mary Anne Grady Flores (and all those who, like her, are being subjected to violations of the American constitution) receives the vindication and respect that she deserves?" Below is one excerpt:

"As the sun now sets on the American empire, how should it be remembered? As the nation that appointed itself as guardian of democracy and then incarcerated citizens who dared to exercise the fundamental right of a citizen of a democracy — that of free speech? As the nation that publicly declared on its currency that 'In God

We Trust' and then looted its own treasuries to carry out illegal wars on foreign nations? As the nation that, at every opportunity, was eager to preach its version of democratic principles to the rest of the world and then impaled itself on its own hypocrisy? As the nation that locked up grandmothers who tried to eliminate the murderous evils of death-by-American-drone? How do you feel it should be remembered?"

Upcoming CC forum in Winnipeg

On Sept. 29 CC board member Eric Unger and Ernie Wiens will host a Conscience Canada focused discussion at the Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg. Contact Eric at 204.275.5325 for more information.

AGM 2014

Murray Lumley's report on the AGM of April 8th is posted on the CC website. We can also send out a copy by mail or email on request.

Highlights:

CC is now in compliance with new federal rules governing non-profit organizations.

Treasurer Dave Bechtel presented the 2013 financial statements and the auditor for 2014 was appointed.

The presentation on "Training the Next Generation of Peace Activists" was inspiring. Thank you Dwyer Sullivan, Father Bob Holmes and Ann Murphy. Some of their tips and ideas are shared in the report.

Our president, Mary Groh, kept tabs on work accomplished by the board over the year and summed it up in her report, which is part of the AGM package posted on our website.

Conscience Canada membership application / renewal



Please fill out and send this form to 8 Chandos Drive, Kitchener, ON N2A 3C2 (OR)

Email to info@consciencecanada.ca & janslakov@shaw.ca.

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

E-mail Address _____

Phone (optional but helpful) _____

Please consider me a member of Conscience Canada, the goals of which I support.¹

I prefer to get the twice yearly newsletter 1) by e-mail _____

2) by post _____ Number of copies to hand out _____

3) both ways _____

Please remove my name from all your mailing lists _____

Signature _____

¹• to promote a change in law to allow all Canadians the right to conscientiously object to military taxation as a right of conscience guaranteed in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms;

• to educate Canadians about freedom of conscience and conscientious objection to military taxation;

• to support conscientious objection to military taxation; and

• to defend freedom of conscience.

Ce formulaire est disponible en français aussi. Vous pouvez l'obtenir en écrivant à janslakov@shaw.ca ou on appelant (250) 537-5251