



# Conscience Canada

Work For Peace... Stop Paying For War!

Travaillons pour la paix. Cessons de payer pour la guerre!

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## Redirecting Taxes, Conversion: Let's Make It Happen!

By Jan Slakov

*Conscientious objector*

I remember, back in 2000, having the opportunity to participate in a Dept. of National Defence consultation on “the future of Canadian defence policy”. It was heartening for me to see that even members of our armed forces expressed concerns about the intense pressures to keep up with the RMA or “Revolution in Military Affairs”, essentially an arms race spurred on by new “smart” technologies. If Canada were to conduct a deep and truly unbiased consultation on how to improve our collective security, we would surely decide

that engaging in such arms races is wasteful, that we would do much better to direct resources to a whole panoply of nonviolent measures to improve our collective health and security.

But very little holistic thinking about how to bring our policies in line with our values is to be found in the halls of power, even in society at large.

It can be difficult to keep peace groups going in such a context, but surely our work, now, is even more valuable. If not us, then who?

So, besides reminding our MPs why we are conscientious objectors, let's not forget the International Days of Action on



Military Spending\*, from April 14 to May 3, 2018. Imagine all the things we could do with even 10% of the world's military budgets... and let's make

the conversion happen!  
\*Info on GCOMS (Global Campaign on Military Spending) available via the IPB (International Peace Bureau) website

**“There is nothing random or spontaneous about radical evil; it is a conspiracy of prodigious proportions”**

- Payam Akhavan, author of the 2017 CBC Massey lectures:  
In Search of a Better World: A Human Rights Odyssey.  
Highly recommended!

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# CONSCIENCE CANADA 2018 Annual General Meeting

(AGM Official Notice)

Date and Time: Saturday, April 7, 2018, 2:00 p.m.

Place: Rm. 2202, Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, ON. 140 Westmount Rd. N.

## 2:00 BUSINESS MEETING

### Agenda

1. Approval of the minutes of the 2017 AGM (available upon request)
2. Review of the work done by CC during 2017 and a look ahead (members' participation invited)
3. Confirmation of board members standing for re-election: David Bechtel, Charlie Diamond, Doug Hewitt-White, Mary Groh, Murray Lumley, Jan Slakov, Dwyer Sullivan, Eric Unger
4. Election of new board member(s)
5. Presentation and Approval of the 2017 financial statements (available upon request)
6. Appointment of auditors for 2018

### BREAK

7. 3:30 pm Tamara Lorincz on "The Climate Costs of Canada's New Defence Policy" - Tamara is a peace researcher & activist extraordinaire, currently doing a PhD in Global Governance



This notice 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, please send your proxy below for your vote, either by post or by e-mail to: [info@consciencecanada.ca](mailto:info@consciencecanada.ca) &/or [janslavok@shaw.ca](mailto:janslavok@shaw.ca)

I, (please print) \_\_\_\_\_, a member in good standing of Conscience Canada, do hereby grant my proxy vote for the April 7, 2018, Annual General Meeting of Conscience Canada to:

\_\_\_\_\_ or in their absence to any Board Member of Conscience Canada.

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



Tamara marking CO Day, May 15, 2015

## 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.Conscience-Canada.ca](http://www.Conscience-Canada.ca). Please let us know your preference.

## B O A R D

Dave Bechtel, Charlie Diamond, Mary Groh, Doug Hewitt-White, Murray Lumley, Jan Slakov, Dwyer Sullivan, Eric Unger

# Planning for the Future

**By Doug Hewitt-White**

*Conscience Canada president*

Last year in her annual report our outgoing president Mary Groh wrote about the on-going challenge of pursuing our goals in the face of declining numbers of peace trusters. She stated:

“We could join with [another] organization to make a greater impact; but this would likely mean people who want to keep their earnings out of the coffers of the military would be on their own, without the support of a 40-year-old organization. Maintaining our unique brand or closing it down is becoming a perennial issue for the board and one which must be solved”.

To tackle this challenge Conscience Canada is working on a three year strategic plan that will plot our future. Working together the current board, along with the help of several long standing members, has been thinking hard about our organization, the many challenges of our plugged-in maxed-out world, and how to go forward.

We decided that the basic elements that we need to describe and explain in the plan include: our mission and vision, our values, our community of supporters and fellow travellers. We are also doing an analysis of the current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that are facing CC. Ultimately, we will create a timeline for necessary tasks and actions.

Out of all this we will get a plan, a document, a clear idea of how to revitalize CC and move forward in making conscientious objection to military taxation a thorn in the side

of the military industrial complex and governments so adept at denying and deflecting.

I want to emphasize that whatever we put together should not be considered as cast in stone. However we assemble the nuts and bolts of this plan it will nevertheless be just a flexible tool for guiding CC forward — always open to reworking and adjusting.

I strongly encourage anyone who has any thoughts or ideas on our plans for the future to just send me an email ([hwadoug@gmail.com](mailto:hwadoug@gmail.com)). I will send you a copy of the plan as it develops. Feel free to have a look at the document, get an idea of how it fits together, and get back to me with your thoughts.

From our plan in process, here is an example:

## CONSCIENCE CANADA STRENGTHS

- A simple direct message, mission and idea: “*Follow the money. War costs billions. People starve while war thrives. Work for peace, stop paying for war.*”
- Committed and engaged board
- Dedication of volunteers and other allies to peaceful conflict resolution. CC members are engaged in peace-building efforts with NGOs, schools, camps, municipal organizations, etc.
- The Canadian Charter of Rights states that the first freedom guaranteed to Canadians is freedom of conscience
- A private member’s Conscientious Objection Act (bill 363) and a Department of Peace Act (bill 373) have been prepared and introduced in parliament.
- War does not make us more secure or safer. Peacemaking, negotiation, reconciliation are the rational choices. Rationality has always been humankind’s strength. War and weapons are the tools of fear and hate and do not work. CC does not espouse emotional, soft-hearted, pie-in-the-sky folly. CC encourages empirical rational reasoning. Freedom of Conscience is freedom to live by beliefs founded in rationality. That is strength.

## Sample Peace Tax Letter:

*À Noter : Cette lettre est disponible en français sur notre site web [www.consciencecanada.ca/fr](http://www.consciencecanada.ca/fr)*

**Dear Prime Minister,**

There are many Canadians who simply believe it is wrong to kill another human being for any reason. During World War II some 10,000 Canadians chose to be conscientious objectors and refused to take up arms in order to kill. Some would say one should be willing

to defend one’s country. This may sound noble but in reality if you go to war you aim to kill before you are killed. The problem, as you know, is that if everyone operates from this premise you end up with what we have today- militaries in almost every country on the planet, including our own, spending precious human, environmental and financial resources preparing to kill. Particularly abhorrent is the fact that even

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our own country produces military vehicles and equipment which are sold around the world to help other nations kill in the name of their country. It is not unlikely that these weapons could be used to wreak havoc on the country from which they originate.

No one said it better than former President Dwight D. Eisenhower:

“Every gun that is fired, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in a final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are 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 hope of its children... This is not the way of life at all in any true sense...”

We long for a leader to speak and to act like this while in office. Mr. Trudeau, you yourself reportedly said that if you were not an MP you would consider participating in a Non-Violent Peace Force. This is noble indeed. We write to request another option in keeping with your desire for peace. Maybe you are an MP and Prime Minister precisely for this option.



Manitoba residents Ernie & Charlotte Wiens have been diverting the military portion of their taxes for 10 years

Use your conviction and influence and government to establish a Legal Peace Tax Fund so that Canadians like us can legally divert the military portion of our taxes to work for peace rather than preparing for war. If you would do so Canadians could choose this option and Canada would begin to show

the rest of the world that we are serious about peace. Our children, our grandchildren and the children of the world will be in a better place.

Our country has allowed for conscientious objection for over 200 years. Is this no longer an option at a time where technological warfare requires dollars more than bodies to fill boots and carry guns?

We anticipate a reply. Please consider our request seriously. And please, not just another form letter.

As we continue to pray for our leaders and the healing of all nations,

*Sincerely,*

*Ernie and Charlotte Wiens*

# 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 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.