



# Conscience Canada

*Work for peace. Stop paying for war!*  
*Travaillons pour la paix. Cessons de payer pour la guerre !*

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## Shaping Peace Together

September 21 is International Peace Day – a day devoted to strengthening peace worldwide. In 2001 the UN General Assembly unanimously designated this day as a 24 hour period of non-violence and cease-fire.

In these COVID times it is clearer than ever that we are not each other's enemies. Our common foe is a vigorous virus that threatens our health, security and way of life. This virus, like others before it, has powerfully demonstrated that what happens in one small corner of our planet can directly impact everyone everywhere. Now is the time to change humankind's focus from violent belligerence masquerading as security to a collective struggle for real climate action, environmental sustainability and social justice.

The 2020 theme for the International Day of Peace is "Shaping Peace Together." The day is dedicated to fostering dialogue and collecting ideas. We are invited to unite and share thoughts on how to weather this viral storm and heal our planet and our hearts.

Here in Canada you can take part in a pre-Day-of-Peace online event on Sunday Sept. 20 at 14:00 EDT. [Act for Peace! A Blue Scarf Peace Day Rally.](#) will talk about the international Blue Scarf Movement for peace as well as having break out discussion groups, collective actions and two special guest speakers. **Sophia Sidarous** is an indigenous rights and environmental activist. **Douglas Roche** is an esteemed Canadian author, parliamentarian, diplomat and activist.

Immediately after this event you can join Conscience Canada's Annual General Meeting on Zoom (agenda and registration info on page 3)

## In Case You Missed It

### **NO War 2020**

Many of our plans over the past few months had to be dramatically rejigged or cancelled. A key event at the end of May that Conscience Canada sponsored was the World Beyond War (WBW) annual conference to be held in Ottawa. Together with the conference we were working on actions to disrupt CANSEC, North America's biggest weapons expo. And then the world shifted.

CANSEC got cancelled. We had no disruptive street demos. But in the spirit of *Stay Calm and Carry On* the WBW conference went ahead with speakers and listeners participating virtually. You can watch and listen to the [NoWar2020 Virtual Conference](#) all on YouTube. There are three



videos: a Nonviolence Workshop, a webinar on Shutting Down Weapons Expos (yes we are still planning to disrupt the CANSEC weapons show in Ottawa in June 2021) and lastly you can hear

speakers at the Anti-War Activists Open Mic Session.

If you haven't already, take a look at what transpired at the conference and think about joining the June 2021 conference and actions.

## Join Conscience Canada

*Membership is open to anyone supporting CC's objectives.*

*No membership fee  
(donations welcome!)*

Visit: [www.consciencecanada.ca/membership](http://www.consciencecanada.ca/membership)

Let us know if you can get involved as a volunteer. We need website and newsletter contributors and new members for the CC board.  
Email : [info@consciencecanada.ca](mailto:info@consciencecanada.ca)

## A B O U T

This newsletter is produced by Conscience Canada, an NGO working since 1978 to:

- increase Canadians' awareness of the connection between taxes and war;
- divert taxes away from war and to peace work;
- support creative non-violent conflict prevention and resolution;
- press for military tax re-direction legislation in Canada.

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of Conscience Canada

This newsletter is available on-line at [www.consciencecanada.ca](http://www.consciencecanada.ca). If you are receiving a printed copy, please let us know if you would prefer the e-version (in colour, less expensive to produce!).

## B O A R D

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

## No New Fighter Jets

CC members took action on July 24 to support the National Day of Action to demand that the Canadian federal government cancel the \$19 billion competition for 88 new fighter jets and instead invest in a just recovery and a green new deal. The Day of Action was organized by the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace, Peace Brigades International and WBW. There were rallies at 22 MP and cabinet minister offices across Canada.



Letters were delivered to MPs demanding that the \$19 billion fighter jet procurement be stopped. Our government has plans for not only these 88 fighter jets (19 B \$) but also new combat ships (70 B \$) and armed drones (up to 5 B \$). These billions are just the procurement costs. There will be billions more needed for armaments, maintenance, training and system upgrades for these high-end war fighting machines.

Conversely our government's investment in climate initiatives and the environment is about \$1.8 billion annually with no plans for a substantial increase.

Canada needs a new green economy, grounded in peace and justice for all. This will require an extraordinary investment for the benefit of all Canadians. We do NOT need increased investment in weapons and armaments, in planning and preparing for war.

Want to help in the campaign? Send a letter to your MP using this VoW [template](#), or sign their [petition](#) for a Green New Deal and just COVID recovery.



# CONSCIENCE CANADA 2020 Annual General Meeting

Sunday Sept 20, 2020, 3:30 p.m. EDT,  
virtual meeting via ZOOM video conferencing

## Agenda

1. Approval of the minutes of the 2019 AGM (available upon request)
2. Review of CC activities in 2019 and a look ahead (members' participation invited)
3. Revised Conscience Canada bylaw. Review of changes and Motion to approve.
4. Confirmation of board members standing for re-election:
5. Election of new board member(s)
6. Presentation and Approval of the 2019 financial statements (available upon request)
7. Appointment of auditors for 2020
8. Steven Staples will talk about what we need to be prepared to do to end the horror of war, the roots of his involvement in anti-war activism and his current work with PeaceQuest. This will be followed by a Q & A session.

**NOTE:** This constitutes the official annual meeting notice required by the Conscience Canada by-laws. Please let us know if you want to receive a PDF copy of the by-laws by email.

## To attend the AGM

please send an email to [info@consciencecanada.ca](mailto:info@consciencecanada.ca)

(you will receive an email reply that confirms your registration and includes a link to use to join the Zoom meeting on September 20).



# If I could, I would . . .

Eric Unger

If I could, I would deliver once and for all the elusive speech that eloquently exposes the truth that war is the result of international leaders exhibiting the moral maturity of children in a sandbox; the speech that would drown warmongers in such a wave of humiliation and shame that they would humbly beg for forgiveness.

If I could, I would pen once and for all the elusive story of peace in such an articulate and attractive way that the knees of the universal soldier would be too weak to bear the implements of murder; the story that so warms the heart of each listener, it would be recited to every child at every bedtime.

If I could, I would rhyme once and for all the elusive poem that perfectly stitches together the immeasurable agony and suffering and heartache of the war zone; the poem that so vividly details the harmony of horror that every reader would instantly proclaim "This must never be!"

If I could, I would paint once and for all the elusive canvas that forever captures the nauseating mix of colour as blind hatred meets blind hatred at the end of a gun barrel; the photograph that makes war so ugly that all its greedy merchants would quickly seek other vocations.

If I could, I would chant once and for all the elusive song of peace; the song that would grip the heart of every listener so intensely that to imagine being the enemy of another human would be repulsive; the song that reminds humanity once and for all that Morning has broken!

Though Peace is elusive, and until now has escaped the speech, the story, the poem, the painting, and the song, ***we dare not give up the chase***. Someday, I believe, humanity will understand that messages of hope for peace and goodwill among nations are not borne by soldiers, or tanks, or fighter jets, or drones, or nuclear weapons. They are borne by mutual respect; the kind that proclaims 'I will treat others as I would like to be treated myself.' May that day come soon!

## What would it look like?

Reflections by Doug Hewitt-White

We hear about defunding the police, the military, NATO, divestment from the military-industrial complex, and diverting tax revenue away from the military towards peace building.

If we really defunded the military what would the result look like? When people talk about defunding and divestment do they mean shutting down every last activity of these organizations? We still need to have a coast guard, emergency response teams, search and rescue. We need to continue to support and care for veterans. However there are some seemingly peaceable activities that bolster sinister objectives. The National Defence Public Relations unit is huge. It conducts military propaganda. It is not innocent. It is responsible for the pervasive them versus us, beware the enemy, might is right, our glorious warrior mentality.

What should be the criteria for what would stay, what should hit the scrap heap?

Let's also be clear. Conflict will remain. A peaceable world will not magically materialize just by not funding the warriors, the police, the armaments industry, the national security spin doctors. We need to be able to support the building of peace where there may be little appetite for it. That will take very disciplined and properly resourced teams of highly trained professional peace builders; makers of peace with the comprehensive skills and highly tuned sensibilities needed to work with communities in crisis that are spiralling down towards armed conflict.

Building peace throughout the world will always be dangerous work. How can peacebuilders be protected – with armed soldiers? What's the alternative? Precisely how would all the intricate political, organizational and transactional things really work?

These are the questions I believe we all need to be thinking about. Check out [Project Save the World](#) headed up by Metta Spencer. Also have a look at WBW's [A Global Security System: An Alternative to War](#). The details of an alternative to our present mess are being worked out. There are answers to those who resignedly say "Be realistic. It's the way things are. There are no other options."

But here is what I find to be the hardest of questions. Once we have nailed down all the details for a workable, just and peaceful world that repudiates and demolishes military might-is-right thinking, what must we do, and how far are we willing to go, to bring it about?

Each of us must look within for that answer.

