



Conscience Canada

Work for peace. Defend the earth. Defund the military!

Œuvrons pour la paix. Défendons la Terre. Définançons l'armée!

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White Poppies, Draw the Line, International Peace Day and more!

The Toronto Association for Peace and Solidarity (TAPS) is organizing a “People’s Hearing” on military spending for Sept. 21, the International Day of Peace. Former Conscience Canada president Bruna Nota plans to be there with white poppies and wallet cards. And she’s happy to mail out wallet cards and sample poppies if you request them. (Please write to her at b.nota@icloud.com.) There are lots of opportunities coming up for distributing white poppies, such as at [Draw the Line](#) events, the International Day of Nonviolence, Oct. 2, and more!

Visit the [Campaign Nonviolence Action Days](#) page for a multitude of ideas for actions you can take in your community.



Library display honouring the International Day of Peace & Campaign Nonviolence Action Days. Note small box with white poppies to the right. Photo courtesy of PRPL, qathet region, BC

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Here is why TAPS (and we!) are concerned:

Military spending in Canada is poised to skyrocket – the pretext being NATO’s arbitrary new commitment that member states commit a staggering 5 percent of GDP on military spending. *That represents \$150B annually in Canada.*

Canada’s projected increase will come at the expense of spending

that working people urgently need: healthcare, education, childcare, environmental protection, housing, employment insurance and public pensions, social assistance, public transit and more.

These considerations are left out of the political discourse, as politicians of all stripes rush to endorse NATO’s demands.

Doug Hewitt-White Steps Down as President

by Jan Slakov

I believe it was in 2016 that Conscience Canada realized we would need a new president, as Mary Groh was stepping down. No one on the then board was willing or able to step up; we weren't sure if CC would be able to continue. Mary suggested we write to people who had contributed recently to the Peace Tax Trust Fund. And lo and behold, Doug Hewitt-White replied. He was a bit daunted that we needed him to do more than just join the board; we needed him to take over as president.

We can imagine people close to him teasing him: "Wow, you seem to love taking on idealist causes with no hope; look what you found now!" CC benefited enormously from Doug's skills and wisdom for the next 8 years of his time as president and he is still involved, especially with formatting the newsletter.

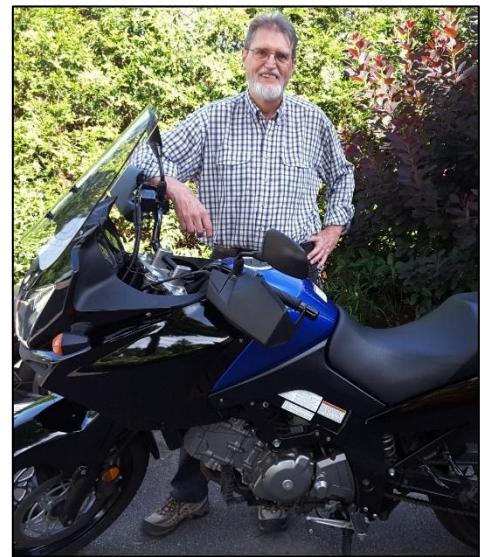
Inspired by Mary Groh's song-writing, I wrote a song to thank Doug, to the tune of "This Little Light of Mine". And the board decided that inviting Doug to designate \$500 towards efforts he sees as especially needed would be a fitting thank you gift.

This thank you is for Doug
You've had a lot to lug!

Joined when so much was at stake
Now let's give you a break

Was your grandson right?
When he called you old school?
Well maybe that's our style,
Hey, it's actually cool!

This little light of ours
It's like a nice, warm hug
Thank you Doug (bis)



Doug with another of his passions!

Doug chose to donate to Peace Brigades International and CJPME's Media Accountability Project (MAP). He also encouraged us to endorse the Platform of the Vote Palestine campaign, which we did.

CC is deeply grateful for Doug's special mix of idealism and competent organizational skills; we can't thank you enough for helping to shepherd us through ongoing work and some big decisions.

Join Conscience Canada

Membership is open to anyone supporting CC's objectives.
No membership fee (donations welcome!)

Visit: www.consciencecanada.ca/membership

Let us know if you can help out as a volunteer.
We need website and social media contributors.
New thinking & viewpoints are always welcome.
Email : info@consciencecanada.ca



CC BOARD

Renée Nunan-Rappard,
Jan Slakov,
Terri Sleeva,
Charles Small,
Linda Thyer

How About Exploring Alternatives Instead of Doubling Down on Disaster?

The Canadian Coalition for Nonviolent Defence is launched!

by Jan Slakov

Surely anyone who's aware of global trends would agree: we face real threats to wellbeing, good governance and freedom/democracy. It can be upsetting and perplexing to see our government embrace doubling down on "defence" spending as a way to strengthen "security".

Writing for the Rideau Institute, board member Robin Collins points out that some of Canada's planned military spending is obviously counterproductive. For instance, regarding the plan to buy F-35 fighter jets, he writes, "Its dependence ... on American manufacturers and designers is concerning. And because of reliability challenges and exorbitant costs, the fighter becomes additionally unattractive..." He also questions the logic of a stealth fighter jet purchase for Canada to begin with. Further, committing to participate in Trump's Golden Dome project would "surrender us to serious strategic risks, persistent technical challenges, and exorbitant costs".

It's obvious that Canada's current government intends to cut spending on other programs, even Pharmacare, for instance, as it increases spending on defence and mega-projects.

Conscience Canada members are not alone in wanting our government to redirect our resources towards programmes that would, we're sure, be more useful in facing threats to wellbeing and security. When we expressed an interest in pursuing unarmed civilian defence/engagement instead of relying on military defence, someone passed that note on to Isaiah Ritzmann, who was keen to work on this approach. Isaiah has proven to be an excellent facilitator and there is now a working group of people from across the country. Our name, at least for now, is the Canadian Coalition for Nonviolent Defence/Coalition canadienne pour la défense nonviolente (CCND/CCDN).

We are eager to find members of government and other high-profile citizens who are interested to discuss this approach. For instance, Senator Yuen Pau Woo graciously accepted our invitation for a zoom meeting that proved to be engaging and thought-provoking for all concerned. Maybe some CC members would like to help this effort by organizing kitchen table or circle discussions in their community. We can help provide background information and ideas to help frame the discussion.

Clearly, we also need to encourage our media outlets to cover the defence spending increase more thoughtfully. It seems to me that the increased spending is being covered as if there were no viable alternatives, as if other perspectives weren't worth mentioning. This unquestioning stance concerns most coverage of plans for "nation-building" investments, many of which are, arguably, very violent in terms of their implementation and impact.



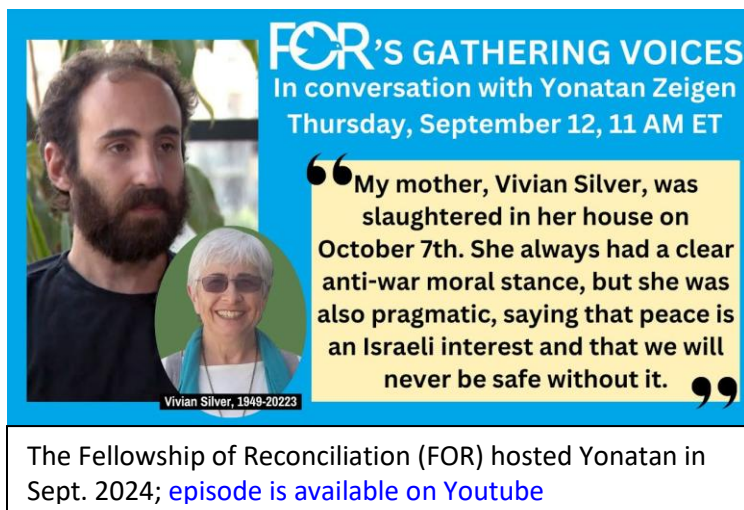
CCND members met with Senator Woo, seen in this photo from 2024

sources: <https://rideauinstitute.ca/2025/07/03/canada-and-the-world-need-prudent-not-excessive-military-spending/>
<https://www.peacequest.ca/p/nato-spendings-first-casualty-pharmacare>

Worth Repeating

“Violent resistance & nonviolent resistance share one very important thing in common. They are both a form of theatre, seeking an audience to their cause. If violent actors are the only ones constantly getting front page coverage and attracting international attention to the Palestinian issue, it becomes very hard for nonviolent leaders to make the case to their communities that civil disobedience is a viable option in addressing their plight. The power of attention is probably gonna come as no surprise to the parents in the room. The surest way to make your child throw increasingly louder tantrums is by giving him attention the first time he throws a fit.”

Julia Bacha in her [TED talk “Pay attention to nonviolence”](#) (July 2011)

A graphic for an event titled "FOR's GATHERING VOICES" in conversation with Yonatan Zeigen on Thursday, September 12, 11 AM ET. It features a photo of Yonatan Zeigen and a quote from his mother, Vivian Silver. Below the graphic is a caption: "The Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) hosted Yonatan in Sept. 2024; [episode is available on Youtube](#)".

FOR's GATHERING VOICES
In conversation with Yonatan Zeigen
Thursday, September 12, 11 AM ET

“My mother, Vivian Silver, was slaughtered in her house on October 7th. She always had a clear anti-war moral stance, but she was also pragmatic, saying that peace is an Israeli interest and that we will never be safe without it.”

Vivian Silver, 1949-2023

The Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) hosted Yonatan in Sept. 2024; [episode is available on Youtube](#)

“The international community is actively supporting the conflict by not conditioning aid, by not investing in peacebuilding, by continuing diplomatic relations with no repercussions. That is actively enabling the conflict. And that has to stop in order for us to be able to start an internal process in each of our societies, and together for a shared future.”

...“when I say we, I mean myself as Israeli Jewish and my Palestinian colleagues – when we look at the rhetoric and the

demonstrations, and this polarization into pro-Palestine or pro-Israel, we feel that it's just not constructive. There needs to be an interfaith effort to rally for peace...” ~ Yonatan Zeigen, son of Vivian Silver, killed at Kibbutz Be'eri on Oct. 7, 2023

In the face of bad news, some good

Ok, much of our news is not just bad; it's unbearable. A famine and ongoing war of vengeance imposed on Palestinians, particularly those in Gaza, and genocidal violence in Sudan and other places, the nation that prided itself on being the “leader of the free world” using masked “police” to round up people and ship them off to prisons that resemble concentration camps as the rule of law is gutted. Meanwhile our Canadian government is poised to bring in Bill C-2, which seems to head Canada in the same direction as the US government is heading; it would further erode rights for refugees and immigrants and enable dangerous levels of surveillance. (If you are concerned about Bill C-2, [please sign this petition](#) by Oct. 28 and let your MP know.)

Our best leaders urge us never to lose the kind of hope that keeps us doing what needs to be done, no matter what.

It can help to know our efforts *can* make a real difference, no matter how dire the situation is. Let's savour a few examples:

As Sojourners Magazine documented, in 2023 the world was holding its breath as Russia invaded Zaporizhzhia, home to Europe's largest nuclear plant. Would there be another Chernobyl, only even more deadly?

Dr. John Reuwer, a disarmament leader and veteran of unarmed civilian peace teams, knew the International Atomic Energy inspectors being sent in to help prevent disaster would need help. He started the Zaporizhzhia Protection Project. Reuwer explained that people in the neighbouring town of Marhanets “said the Russians would never allow us to bring unarmed protection to the plant. I said, ‘Do you mean it would take a miracle?’ ‘Yeah,’ they said. ‘Okay,’ I said. ‘Have we had any other miracles?’ ”

No doubt he was referring to “one of the most amazing stories in nonviolence history” of how unarmed Ukrainian civilians held off Russian soldiers for a week, with no casualties, when the Russians wanted to invade Enerhodar, where the Zaporizhzhia plant is situated.

As the Metta Center for Nonviolence sums it up: “The danger posed by the power plant is enormous – even a small misstep, one missile misfired, could lead to a global disaster. ...The use of nonviolent tactics –

like unarmed civilian protection, used by the Zaporizhzhya Protection Project – is a move to a higher level of consciousness. And it is one that has been proven, time and again, to work.”

CC board member Linda Thyer learned of this story through a World Beyond War conference and was successful in getting John to join a CAPE (Can. Assoc. of Physicians for the Environment) conference.

Charles Small, another CC board member, has been supporting Independent Jewish Voices, which succeeded in getting Revenue Canada to remove the Jewish National Fund from a list of eligible charities, as it has been funding illegal takeover of Palestinian land. His efforts to convince mainstream Jewish organizations that their unwavering support for Israeli government actions will likely further the growth of antisemitism, are much needed.



Sobornyi Ave., Zaporizhzhya – photo by Alexey Tolmachov

When our spirits flag, it can help to remember the people we encouraged, the insights and ideas we shared, the things we built, knowing they all make a difference.

Sources: <https://sojo.net/magazine/septemberoctober-2023/enacting-miracle-ukrainian-nuclear-power-plant>
<https://www.mettacenter.org/unitingnations/zaporizhzhya-protection-project>

A B O U T

This newsletter is produced by Conscience Canada, an NGO working since 1978 to empower our members and all of society:

- to assert their conscientious objection to having their money conscripted, and earth's resources exploited, to pay for war and preparation for war;
- to champion the peace and well-being of all humankind; and
- to demand an end to all complicity and support for war and militarism

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. If you are receiving a printed copy, let us know if you would prefer the on-line e-version (in colour, less expensive to produce!).

Mourn Civilian Deaths Celebrate Life



Wear a White Poppy

- To Remember All War Casualties
- To Challenge Everyday Militarism
- To Commit to Peace

Peace Poppy Union: poppy.org.uk

Join us. Support peaceful conflict resolution. Wear a White Poppy from

September 21 to December 10

International Day of Peace to International Human Rights Day

Add a red poppy in November to remember veterans of all wars

History

In 1933, the Women's Co-operative Guild in England produced white poppies to wear as a symbol of their commitment to work for peace and to end their acquiescence to militarism. The tradition continues and is being adopted in many communities to remember all war victims, including civilians who now make up over 90%.

Our call to conscience:
Actively choose non-violence.
Invest in peaceful solutions to conflict.

For more information:
www.consciencecanada.ca
email: info@consciencecanada.ca



Conscience Canada

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

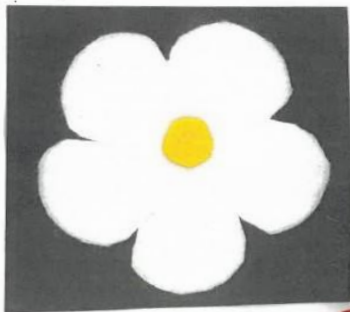


Wear a white poppy

From September 21
(International Peace Day)

to

December 10
(International Human Rights Day)



To get white poppies
and /or Wallet Cards contact:

www.consciencecanada.ca
info@consciencecanada.ca

In November add
A red poppy to
Remember Veterans
Of all wars



Poster to promote
Peace & the White
Poppy campaign in
libraries and other
public spaces