

Conscientious Objection to Military Taxation: Alternative Service for Our Taxes

As conscientious objectors to military taxation (COMTs), we choose to follow the dictate of our conscience and refuse to pay for war. As A.J. Muste once said, "There is no way to peace, peace is the way"... and so we, as conscientious objectors, do our best to end our complicity with killing and war. We commit ourselves to work for peace and justice.

As COMTs we want all our taxes to be used to enhance our common humanity. We want to use all our resources to build a just world for all. We refuse to pay for war.



Conscience Canada has worked since 1978 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
- educate Canadians about freedom of conscience and conscientious objection to military taxation
- support conscientious objection to military taxation
- defend freedom of conscience

In April, nine members of Conscience Canada (CC) attended the 2004 Annual General Meeting in Toronto, with 18 additional members voting by proxy. In addition to dealing with internal organizational issues resulting from the move from Victoria to Toronto and an audit of the financial records, our work over the last year has included: organisation of over a dozen public meetings of COMTs and sympathisers to coincide with this year's AGM; participation in anti-war demonstrations; support of the petition initiated by Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade to protest the Canada Pension Plan investments in arms manufacture; expansion of the CC website and creation of a CC internet listserv; and publication of two issues of the CC newsletter. CC Secretary Jan Slakov is working on "Educating to Peace," a project focussing on the celebration of Canada's Remembrance Day, and spreading the practice of wearing the white poppy in Canada. Once again in 2003, Svend Robinson presented the Peace Tax Petition to the House of Commons, calling on Parliament to enact the Peace Tax legislation known as the Conscientious Objection Act. The petition gave rise to important correspondence with the Canadian Minister of Finance, and is keeping the issue alive in Ottawa.

This summer, CC and our francophone component, Nos impôts pour la paix, had representatives attending the Tenth International Conference on War Tax Resistance and Peace Tax Campaign biennial meeting in Brussels.

Dominique Boisvert, Marilyn Hébert, Joshua Mira Goldberg, Bruna Nota, Jan Slakov, and Don Woodside were elected to the Board of Directors for the upcoming year. We thank past board members, staff and volunteers, with particular recognition of Heather Sturrock for her service on the Board.

Conscience Canada By-Laws and Operating Rules are available to Conscience Canada members upon request. For more information, contact us by e-mail at: <consciencecanada@shaw.ca>.

For a wealth of inspiring and helpful information, please visit Conscience Canada's web site at: <<http://members.shaw.ca/consciencecanada/index.html>>. ☺