



conscience update

issue 129

summer 2005

newsletter of **conscience** THE PEACE TAX CAMPAIGN



Photo | Simon Heywood/conscience

conscience and the Peace Tax Seven took part in the massive **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** demonstrations in Edinburgh. Full story on page 2.

Peace Tax Seven set to appeal

The Peace Tax Seven Judicial Review campaign is reaching a climax. The group applied for permission for a full judicial review hearing on the right to conscientious objection to taxes going towards military spending. The challenge is based on the right to freedom of religion, conscience and belief under Article 9 of the European convention on Human Rights. Although Judge Wilson refused permission, he has allowed the group to renew their application and argue that this is a case

which merits a full hearing.

Spokesperson for the Peace Tax Seven, Robin Brookes, says "Our campaign is now at a crucial stage. We need to rally all the supporters we can to come to this hearing in order to impress on the judge that there is considerable public interest in this case. If we can pack the court and have a peaceful demonstration outside, so much the better. We cannot stress enough, how important it is to have the physical presence of as many people as possible in and outside the court. This is our only chance to get our case heard."

conscience

campaigns for the legal right for those who have a conscientious objection to war to have the military part of their taxes spent on peacebuilding initiatives

STOP PRESS ... URGENT ACTION ... STOP PRESS ... URGENT ...

The appeal hearing will take place on **Monday 25 July** (this Monday) at the **Royal Courts of Justice** on the Strand, at any time from **10.30am**. A 2 hour hearing has been allowed as opposed to the usual 30 minutes. If you are able to get to the court on Monday morning, please see **www.peacetaxseven.com** for details or call **07981 680638**. If you cannot get to the court, please sign the online petition at **www.peacetaxseven.com** by Sunday evening.

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conscience

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lobbyists' update

Early Day Motion **116 Conscientious Objectors and Taxation** in support of the Peace Tax Seven lapsed with the calling of the general election - having gained 31 signatures.

Parliamentary Motion **S2M-1967 Shifting Expenditure from Military Spending to Working for Peace** is still live in the Scottish Parliament - currently with 29 signatures.

Statement of Opinion **OPIN-2005-0003 Conscience - The Peace Tax Campaign** is still live in the Welsh Assembly - currently with 7 signatures.

Very many thanks to those of you who have contacted your elected representatives about the above motions and statement. **conscience** still need more lobbyists, however. We currently have about 170 people on the regular lobbyists' list but with over 600 constituencies there is a long way to go before all MPs are contacted by constituents about peace tax.

- If you are willing to write 3 or 4 times a year to your MP on behalf of **conscience** please let Oliver know.

general election

Twenty-five **conscience** supporting MPs stood down or lost their seats in the general election. It is important to try to regain lost support in parliament and increase support for **conscience** in the build up to a bill on conscientious objection and military taxation, hopefully early in 2006.

If you have a new MP please write to ask her/him to support **conscience's** work to secure the right to pay for peace not war. If you know your MP does not support **conscience** try addressing her/his concerns - contact Oliver to check the parliamentary records to find out what your MP thinks about peace tax issues. If your MP already supports

conscience ask her/him to forward your concerns about paying for killing to the Treasury. For ideas on what to say see the last newsletter or contact Oliver.

MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY

The **conscience** stall at the Make Poverty History rally in Edinburgh on 2 July was kept busy all day as a quarter of a million people waited in The Meadows to set off on the march. The "Peace Tax Inspectors" asked people to sign letters to their MPs, making the link between poverty and war. If you were not there you can download the letter from the **conscience** website and send it yourself.

"In 2003, the UK was the third largest military spender in the world; in 2004, it had risen to second place, giving the lie to many media reports of 'defence cuts'. Last year over £27 billion (\$47 billion) of taxpayers' money was poured into the military and a further £900 million subsidising the UK arms industry. This is roughly equivalent to the additional amount of aid spending worldwide that the World Bank estimates is required to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (\$40-70 billion per annum to 2015)."

summer fun in the sun

You can help **conscience** by running a stall this summer and/or by using our display material. It is a great way to tell people about peace tax and is one of the best ways of getting people interested and informed about the issue. We will send you all the necessary materials - leaflets, letters, stickers, Peace Tax Returns, posters etc. You can also download the whole display direct from the **conscience** website.

- Please contact Oliver if you are interested in running a **conscience** stall this summer.

Military Service Act - 1916

90 years ago the country was debating whether men should be forced - conscripted - to kill and die in the name of peace. Some said the only way to peace was war. Others believed the only way to peace was by peaceful means - through negotiation, disarmament, building trust and emphasising common aims and values. The decision to introduce conscription in 1916 was forced on the government by the need to replace those they had sent to kill and die in the fields of France and Belgium.

Pacifists and others, however, successfully argued that *the right of the government to raise an army must not override the right of the individual not to be complicit*

in killing. The right to conscientious objection to military service was recognised and those granted CO status were able to perform alternative civilian service, enter non-combatant units of the armed forces, or to go about their lives as free people. In this way all were able to contribute to security and help end suffering without compromising their beliefs.

The debate continues today in a different form. There is still no provision for those who deeply object to paying for others to kill, yet all we ask for is the right to take a peaceful option and pay for a peaceful alternative - just as COs were able to follow a peaceful option during the First and Second World Wars.

members' news

Edinburgh in October

This year's Annual Event will be in conjunction with the Scottish Network for a Civilian Peace Service. 'Paying for War: Paying for Peace' will take place in St. John's Church, Princes St., Edinburgh on 1st October. Speakers will include Dennis Canavan MSP, who proposed **conscience's** first ever bill in the House of Commons in 1986.

- Please use the enclosed leaflet to book your place.

Rosemary Dinnage

We were shocked and saddened by the sudden loss of **conscience** Executive Committee member Rosemary Dinnage, who died from a stroke in April.

Rosemary joined the EC in May last year and made a tremendous impact in that short time. We will all miss her positive and thoughtful contributions and the work she undertook between meetings. Our thoughts and condolences are with her family.

diary

25 July

Peace Tax Seven in court - see front page.
w peacetaxseven.com

6 August

Hiroshima Day
60th Anniversary. For events near you see:
w networkforpeace.org.uk/Hiroshima.html

9 August

Nagasaki Day
60th Anniversary.

10 September

MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY
White Band Day 2

11 September

Concert for peace
7.30pm at Lauderdale House, Highgate Hill, London N6. Organised by Musicians Against Nuclear Arms, with Tony Lamb (clarinet) and John Flinders (piano).
t 020 8455 1030

13 -16 September

DSEi Arms Fair
Docklands, London. Protests by Campaign Against Arms Trade
t 020 7281 0297
w caat.org.uk

1 October

conscience annual event (see article left).

more diary dates at
networkforpeace.org.uk

contacting the office

general enquiries

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t 0870 777 3223 (national rate)

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e info@conscienceonline.org.uk

campaigns enquiries

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e lobby@conscienceonline.org.uk

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e develop@conscienceonline.org.uk

www.conscienceonline.org.uk

The UK government and conflict prevention

Sarah Graham-Brown looks at some of the good work the government has been doing on conflict prevention and identifies how it could be further improved.

Security and conflict have been central themes in government thinking since September 2001, followed by Afghanistan and the Iraq war with its violent aftermath. The response to perceived threats has focused primarily on counter-terrorism and military preparedness.

This approach has been challenged by insistent calls from civil society, NGOs, academia and the international community to consider different approaches to achieving security, focused on understanding the causes of violent conflict with the aim of preventing it or building peace where violence has already occurred.

The UK government began moves in this direction with the establishment in 2001 of the cross-departmental Conflict Prevention Pools run jointly by the International Development (DFID), the Foreign Office (FCO) and the Ministry of Defence (MOD).

It has recently launched several new initiatives that address conflict prevention and post conflict reconstruction. There have been welcome moves to address conflict prevention in a wider framework, linking conflict to physical and economic insecurity, poverty, and fragile state structures. For example, in its recent strategy paper on security and development, DFID clearly identifies the way poverty interacts with insecurity and conflict. DFID is also focusing on working more effectively in “fragile states”, where the government cannot or will not carry out its basic functions. Such states are not necessarily embroiled in violent conflict, but could be in danger of becoming so.

A report on countries at risk of instability from the Cabinet Office

Strategy Unit, titled Investing in Prevention, analyses the complex root causes of insecurity, and makes the case for “more prevention and better intervention”. This document suggests ways in which the government could create a climate of stability and improve international mechanisms for preventing or managing conflict.

The goals set by the government on conflict prevention in the 2005 Public Service Agreements (PSAs) reflect these themes: “By 2008, deliver improved effectiveness of UK and international support in conflict prevention by addressing long-term structural causes of conflict, managing regional and national tension and violence, and supporting post-conflict reconstruction, where the UK can make a significant contribution, in particular Africa, Asia, Balkans and the Middle East.” (Joint PSA for DFID, FCO, and MOD)⁽¹⁾

There have also been organisational changes. A new cross-departmental unit, the Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit (PCRU), is being set up. This is designed to facilitate the handover from military to civilian control after a conflict, mobilising expertise to support civilian administration. It is designed mainly for situations in which British forces have been involved, whether alone or as part of wider EU or UN forces. The impetus for this development came from the difficult experiences of post conflict situations in Kosovo, Afghanistan and most importantly, Iraq.

The Foreign Office, meanwhile, has regrouped a number of units dealing with aspects of conflict in the Conflict Issues group. This includes peace keeping, the Conflict Prevention Pools and some new units – one relating

key UK reports

Investing in Prevention: an international strategy to manage risks of instability and improve crisis response, Cabinet Office, Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit (February 2005) http://www.strategy.gov.uk/work_areas/countries_at_risk/index.asp

Fighting poverty to build a safer world: A strategy for security and development, DFID (March 2005) <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/securityforall.pdf>

to Countries at Risk of Instability, and another which links to the PCRU.

The challenge will be to translate these initiatives into practical policies that form part of a coherent security strategy. Conflict prevention needs a major commitment of financial and human resources in the medium to long term, and the political will to back it. This major shift in emphasis is not yet in evidence.

For example, the Global Conflict Prevention Pool and the Africa Conflict Prevention Pool are now seen as useful examples of dealing with conflict though “joined up government”, which other states are interested in emulating. But these are small units with limited funds totalling £134m a year, less than one third of one percent of the budgets of the three sponsoring departments.

When set against the scale of expenditure on other aspects of ‘security’, including counter terrorism and military spending, the amounts allocated to conflict prevention and peace building are miniscule.

The 2004 Treasury spending review set targets and allocated resources for 2005/6 to 2007-8. Although there is a welcome increase in development spending to £6.5 billion by 2007 (0.47 of Gross National Income), resources allocated for the Conflict Prevention Pools remain miniscule. For the next three years GCPP funding will remain static at £74 million; while the ACPF will receive a modest rise.

For the same period, spending on counter terrorism will rise to £2 billion, double its level before September 2001, while the military’s expenditure limit will reach £33.5bn in 2007/8.⁽²⁾

This raises critical questions

about the coherence of government policy – how does government conflict prevention policy square with often destabilising promotion of UK arms sales and high levels of expenditure on the military?

A significant contribution to the debate about what security means and how it can be achieved has come from outside the UK. In advance of the Millennium Summit in September 2005, the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has issued *In Larger Freedom*, a report that calls for a new and broader understanding of global security, and how threats to it can be addressed. It stresses the interdependence of security, development and human rights.

Drawing on the conclusions of the High Level Panel on Threats Challenges and Change which reported in late 2004, it addresses reform of UN structures, and also proposes a UN Peacebuilding Commission to support longer term recovery of states emerging from conflict. At present almost half of these slip back into conflict within five years. The report concludes that ‘investment in prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding can save millions of lives’.

The UK government has begun to make this investment, but far greater resources will be required, in the UK and Europe as a whole, to make a difference.

- (1) 2004 Spending Review, HM Treasury website: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spending_review/spend_sr04/psa/spend_sr04_psaindex.cfm
- (2) http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spending_review/spend_sr04/report/spend_sr04_repindex.cfm

key UN reports

A more secure world: our shared responsibility: Report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, United Nations (December 2004) <http://www.un.org/secureworld/>

In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all: Report of the Secretary-General, United Nations, (March 2005) <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/>



Lord Kitchenblair's diary

a quarterly round-up of war tax resistance

Peace Tax Seven member Joe Jenkins was standing at the front of his A Level Theology class on his first day at a new job when the school received a call.

"There's a bailiff outside the front door. I opened it a minute ago and he said that if he didn't receive the money in 20 minutes he's getting the police and if I don't let him in he'll break the front door down. He put his foot against the front door and told me he had a right to come in," said Joe's wife. During the next frenetic 45 minutes Joe was phoned twice, once asking for credit card details and later to be told the police were on their way to assist the bailiff as he "broke the front door down."

Under pressure and concerned for the safety of his wife and new baby, Joe finally agreed to pay a portion of the withheld tax. He offered to go to the house as soon as he finished his class. "No pay up now. I need your credit card details now or we'll break in," was the response. Reluctantly, Joe paid some tax over the phone.

Once Joe had time to talk to the lawyers working on the Peace Tax Seven's Judicial Review he realised the bailiff had gone beyond his powers. In a response to a formal letter of complaint from Public Interest Lawyers the bailiffs claimed "the bailiff refutes allegations that he put his foot up to the door or advised that he would call the Police." They would though, wouldn't they?

Clearly this was a ploy to scare Joe into paying his war tax. You do not have to let a bailiff into your house nor can they force their way past you if you answer the door. If all your doors and windows are securely closed they will not be able to gain peaceful entry to your house unless you let them in. You

cannot be arrested for refusing to allow a bailiff into your home. If a bailiff is accompanied by the police, they are only there to prevent a breach of the peace, not to help the bailiff do his job. "The threat to call the police was irrelevant, a nasty method nevertheless as it left my wife very shaken" Joe said afterwards.



Liverpool doctors, Lis Davidson and Janet Price, with Lis's Dove cheques.

In contrast, Lis Davidson, a doctor in Liverpool, offered to pay her tax but nobody came to collect it. Lis had written cheques for her withheld tax on a flock of white cardboard doves, beautifully arranged in the garden, and invited Inland Revenue to collect them.

In a previous protest Lis, and fellow doctor Janet Price, delivered two huge dove-shaped cheques to Inland Revenue. Unbelievably, Lis's cheque was lost. "Janet's cheque had been paid but mine had gone missing - it was apparently well remembered in the office! I was advised to make a complaint and get reimbursed the interest (which of course I have no intention of paying anyway). They seemed to think I'd be upset by this, whilst I was having difficulty stopping myself bursting into giggles!"

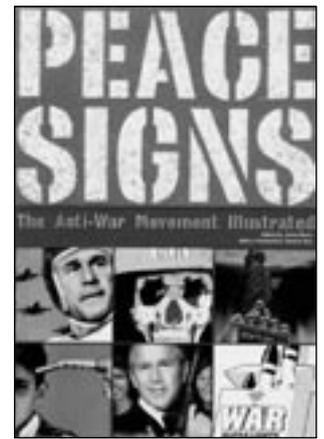
Over & Out, KB

review

from p8/ "Coalition of the Unwilling."

But *Peace Signs* is more than just a collection of art; it is a snapshot of a truly global protest. This book brings back the anger I felt about the headlong rush to war in response to the atrocities of September 11th, but it also brings back the feelings of solidarity and possibility that were inspired by the protests of February 15th.

This is a coffee-table book with a difference - gone are the blandly beautiful pictures usually associated with this format, in their place are images that challenge us. By reminding us of the horror of war and the creativity of the peace movement, they inspire us to help build a movement capable not only of opposing wars at the point where they are almost inevitable, but of working year-in, year-out to promote the positive alternatives that will truly make war history.



Peace Signs: The Anti-War Movement Illustrated, Edited by James Mann, Edition Olms, 2004
 isbn 3-283-00487-0
 208pp £19.95
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review

Jon Nott reviews **Peace Signs: The Anti-War Movement Illustrated** edited by James Mann, with a Foreword by Howard Zinn



It is hard to do justice to such a visual book with mere words and a few black and white illustrations. *Peace Signs* contains over 200, large-format pages full of inspirational, shocking, funny and upsetting images created by artists from around the world in response to

the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

The book opens with a two short essays (in English, French and German) about the history of anti-war art and the development of the internet for distributing the imagery of protest. The artworks are grouped in six categories relating to different aspects of opposition to the war, including “No blood for oil”, “Bombs over Baghdad” and the /to p7



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Osama says "I want you to invade Iraq" | from the Parody & Satire section of Peace Signs

