



# conscience update

issue 130

autumn 2005

newsletter of **conscience** THE PEACE TAX CAMPAIGN

## Peace Tax Seven to appeal again

*"We will appeal and if necessary take this all the way to the European Court of Human Rights."*

In a two-hour hearing at a packed High Court in London on Monday 25 July, Judge Collins rejected the Peace Tax Seven's appeal, and upheld the previous decision to refuse them permission for a full hearing.

The judge accepted that they had enough of an argument to warrant a full hearing but refused to offer one, at least in a British court. It was, he said, an argument relating to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The basic decision-making body for the ECHR is the European Court in Strasbourg, so, effectively, they were told to take the case to Strasbourg.

The Peace Tax Seven were bringing the case under the British 1998 Human Rights Act (HRA), which allows British courts the discretion to interpret the European Convention in their own British way. There has been no ruling on military taxation under the Human Rights Act, so this was uncharted legal territory. As we understand it, the judge could have allowed a full hearing in Britain under the terms of the HRA, but he chose not to. He said he was afraid that if British courts allowed themselves to listen to their arguments, it would risk putting British law, as regards the Convention, out of step with the rest of the EU.

"It will be possible for us to appeal again, to the Appeal Court. Chances



Photo | Robin Brookes

**Members of the Peace Tax Seven consult their lawyers outside the High Court following their appeal hearing.**

of a win are very slim, but this would open the door to a direct application to the Strasbourg court. The Seven have decided unanimously to proceed along these lines and we have instructed our lawyers accordingly," said Simon Heywood, one of the Peace Tax Seven.

■ We expect a date for the second appeal to be set some time in the autumn. If you would like to be informed of the date, please contact the office or sign up to our new email news update (see page 3).

■ You can also keep up to date by visiting the Peace Tax Seven's website **w** [www.peacetaxseven.com](http://www.peacetaxseven.com)

### 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

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## lobbying update

Thank you to everyone who wrote to their MP after the election. We are starting to rebuild support in Parliament after several supportive MPs stood down or lost their seat in May. We have been forwarded some promising letters from MPs by lobbyists around the country.

It is also encouraging to see the number of **conscience** lobbyists grow slowly - but there is a long way to go. Our aim is to have at least one lobbyist in each constituency so that all MPs are informed whenever something related to peace tax arises in parliament.

MPs rarely reply to letters from non-constituents. It is especially important, therefore, that constituents contact their MPs to help them to understand our proposals and to urge them to support peace tax legislation.

- To be added to **conscience**'s list of regular lobbyists please get in touch with Oliver at the office.

## taxing times

Many new MPs (and even some who have been around longer) have not heard of our proposals, under which conscientious objectors to war could have the military portion of all their taxes redirected to a fund that will never be used for war or killing. If more MPs heard about our peace tax proposals and, most importantly, understood them, **conscience** could gain much more support in parliament.

An argument we commonly hear against a peace tax system is it would be prohibitively complicated and expensive to administer. But tax doesn't have to be taxing! One possible system, which is remarkably simple, is as follows:

1. The government sets up a ring-fenced fund only to be used for non-military security.
2. Individuals are able to declare their conscientious objection to war to via their Tax Return.

3. The Treasury calculates the national average individual tax contribution to the MoD.
4. The Treasury multiplies the national average tax contribution to the MoD by the number of declared conscientious objectors to calculate the funds to be deposited in the Non-Military Security Fund.
5. The elected government decides how the Non-Military Security Fund is allocated to non-violent security and defence initiatives.
  - If your MP is worried about how peace tax would work in practice, let him/her know how straightforward it could be.

## security shopping

Another common argument we hear is that taxes pay for the military to protect the country and safeguard human rights. But there is more than one option on the security shopping list.

Conscientious objectors, and many others, believe there are better ways to protect human rights here and abroad than by denying others the right to life. War just does not fit with a world of 'equal and inalienable' rights.

Under a peace tax system the government would have a fund ready and waiting to be spent on non-violent peacebuilding initiatives e.g. supporting human rights groups in areas of conflict; assisting refugees to return home and find work; disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of combatants. Britain already has a lot of expertise in these areas.

Focusing on the non-violent initiatives that are available to deal with conflict might be a new 'angle' when writing to your MP about peace tax. It would certainly help get past the familiar response of "What would you spend the money on then?"

- For advice on what to say to your MP about non-military security ideas get in touch with Oliver.

# members' news

# diary

## annual event

Due to a combination of circumstances beyond our control, we have had to call off our annual event, planned for 1 October in Edinburgh. Registration fees will be refunded to those who had booked and we are looking at ways to hold a similar event in the future.

## membership questionnaire

We have had a very good response to this year's membership questionnaire. Early analysis shows very high levels of approval of the accounts, the Executive Committee and the revised Terms of Reference. Final results will be published in the next newsletter.

## Thank you

Many thanks to those who responded to our summer appeal. We are well on the way to our target, but if you were on holiday in August and have yet to respond, it's not too late.

- Your contribution now will help us to prepare for the Peace Tax Seven's appeal, which we expect some time in the autumn.

## keep up-to-date via email

Important news, such as developments in the Peace Tax Seven case don't always fit into the quarterly cycle of our newsletters, so we have launched an email list to send occasional updates to members in between newsletters. We will not send more than one email per month and you can opt in or out whenever you like.

- If you would like to subscribe, simply send an email to: [listserver@conscienceonline.org.uk](mailto:listserver@conscienceonline.org.uk) with the subject "subscribe conscience\_news"

## farewell but not good bye

Simon Heywood, who has been working in the office for the past year as a Quaker Peaceworker, came to the end of his placement in August.

Simon spent most of his time working on our new non-military security website, which will be launched in the new year. We are very pleased that Simon is staying on in a voluntary capacity to work on the website launch.

You can read some advance extracts from the website, starting on page 4.

## 5 November

### Concert for peace

7.30pm at St James's Church, 197 Piccadilly, London W1. Organised by Musicians Against Nuclear Arms. The MANA Chamber conducted by Paul Watkins, play Rossini, Mozart, Baermann and Beethoven. Guest speaker: Tony Benn.  
t 020 8455 1030

## 13 November

### Remembrance Sunday Lecture

Martin Bell OBE "A Requiem for War". Organised by Movement for the Abolition of War, 2pm, Imperial War Museum, London SE1. Tickets not required.  
w [abolishwar.org.uk](http://abolishwar.org.uk)

## 18-19 November

### What Makes Peacebuilding Effective

Peace Direct conference, Rugby. The different dimensions of conflict, from the personal to the global - bringing together those with an interest in conflict here and overseas. Cost: £35-£120. Contact: Francesca Cerletti  
e [Francesca@peacedirect.org](mailto:Francesca@peacedirect.org)  
t 020 7549 0285

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# non-military security really works

In his year as a Quaker Peacemaker at **conscience**, Simon Heywood has been working on a website to promote non-military security to a wider audience. The website will be launched in the new year, but here we provide some exclusive extracts.

## Defence Without Destruction: Protecting the Ethical Taxpayer

Here are some facts about the world's military:

- The world's taxpayers contribute \$2 million to the world's military, every minute of every day.
- One person in every three is at war. From 1997 - 2002, about three million people, including over 2 million civilians, were killed in wars. Most of these deaths were from small arms manufactured in rich western countries, and exported to poor ones, often with generous government subsidies, funded by taxpayers.
- Over the period 1994 - 2002, the world's poor countries paid \$560 billion to rich countries. Poverty and marginalisation are commonly recognised as the major causes of war and conflict.
- Military spending is commonly called defence and security. Military spending creates the opposite of security; it shores up the inequalities that lead to war.
- In 1999, a head of planning in the Pentagon wrote: "The real task for the US army is to make the world safe for our economic and cultural assault. Towards these goals there will be a fair amount of killing."
- Wars which don't happen don't make the headlines.
- Perhaps it's time they did ...

## Grassroots Action

Community peacework builds peaceful relationships where they're needed most.

Nonviolent mass movements exert critical power, in critical situations. Often, in crisis situations, nonviolence isn't tried; when it is tried, it often works. When it works, it isn't often noticed, or remembered. More funding and more publicity for grassroots action would make the world a safer place.

*In 1989, thirteen nations comprising 1,695,000 people experienced nonviolent revolutions that succeeded beyond anyone's wildest expectations . . . If we add all the countries touched by major nonviolent actions in our century (the Philippines, South Africa . . . the independence movement in India . . .) the figure reaches 3,337,400,000, a staggering 65% of humanity! All this in the teeth of the assertion, endlessly repeated, that nonviolence doesn't work in the 'real' world.*

Walter Wink

Early thinkers on nonviolence included Mohandas K. (Mahatma) Gandhi, Hannah Arendt and others. They shared a vision that people can use force without violence.

The political thinker Gene Sharp famously listed 198 methods of nonviolent action for protest communities.

These are extraordinarily, and increasingly, powerful methods of nonviolent conflict, leading to success in the United States, Serbia, and the former Eastern bloc, and arising on an even more massive scale against the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

## Managing Conflict

Conflict doesn't have to be violent. It can be good. When there is some positive change long overdue, it can bring matters to a head. Protest today stops war tomorrow - or the day after tomorrow. Reform today prevents crisis tomorrow.

And when crisis crops up, one trained negotiator can be worth a thousand trained killers - at a thousandth of the cost.

The two basic ideas are:

EARLY WARNING - noticing when violence becomes likely

RAPID REACTION - ways of stopping it.

*Conflict is an opportunity, a gift. ...*

*Conflict flows from life. ... Conflicts in relationships at all levels are the way life helps us to stop, assess, and take notice. ... Without it, life would be a monotonously flat topography of sameness and our relationships would be woefully superficial.*

*Conflict also creates life: through conflict we respond, innovate and change. Conflict can be understood as the motor of change, that which keeps relationships and social structures honest, alive, and dynamically responsive to human needs, aspirations and growth.*

J. P. Lederach

## Mozambique 1989 - 1992: A Positive Space: the Community of Sant'Egidio

An international church body brokers a top-down political settlement to end violence.

Following independence from Portugal in 1975, the Marxist FRELIMO government (Frente da Libertação de Mocambique, "Mozambique Liberation Front") was drawn into struggles against white minority rule in Rhodesia and South Africa. These governments hit back by funding an insurgent group, RENAMO. This led to a civil war which outlasted several international and intergovernmental attempts at a settlement.

Through contacts in the Catholic church in Mozambique, a Rome-based Catholic community, the Community of Sant'egidio

- delivered humanitarian aid, and made contacts with both warring factions
- hosted meetings between RENAMO and the Italian Foreign Ministry
- hosted the first direct talks between RENAMO and FRELIMO
- became more involved as mediators in two years of talks
- acted as a magnet for wider international support, from the Italian, US, Portuguese and Zimbabwe governments and others

A peace accord was signed in 1992 and elections were held in 1994.

Of course, these extracts are missing the images and links that the website will be full of, but we hope that these few examples will whet your appetite for the finished project. If you'd like to be informed of the launch date and kept up to date with progress, please email [outreach@conscienceonline.org.uk](mailto:outreach@conscienceonline.org.uk)

# review

from back page/ exist for bringing democratic pressure on Parliament” did, in fact, make common cause with activists who argued that “almost all great advances have involved illegality.” At first, the young movement’s diversity was made manifest at marches in which youthful beatniks appeared, “capering out in front of the march, destroying the wooden dignity of ... the official leaders of the cavalcade.” It was an odd, often strained, but fruitful alliance.

The most important fact about the anti-nuclear movement is its capacity for success. In the end there was to be no Blue Streak, the now-forgotten British-made bomb of the 1950s. There was to be no neutron bomb - the bomb which killed populations but left buildings standing. In Britain, popular support for nuclear weapons in general always hovered around the 70% mark, but a similar majority often opposed specific systems or strategies such as the neutron bomb itself - an anxiety not allayed by the British government’s famously useless plans for civil defence following the nuclear attacks which the British deterrent had supposedly put out of the question.

The most controversial weapons systems were precisely those, like the neutron bomb, which gave the lie to the official line that nuclear weapons were defensive and deterrent in nature. Defence and deterrence could only work if the nuclear powers really did believe, as they claimed, that nuclear war could not be won and must not be fought. All that was required for the logic of deterrence was the simple threat of unlimited apocalypse, which emerged early, in the 1950s.

Later smaller, tactical weapons such as cruise and Pershing contributed nothing to it. They were manifestly designed for winnable nuclear wars which would be limited - that is, confined to Europe. Paul Rogers has shown that senior military and political figures (many now retired and thus in more confiding mood) certainly continued to regard aggressive nuclear war in exactly this way, rather as their predecessors had in the 1940s.

The masters of cold war could not say so out loud at the time, because even a limited nuclear war would have involved - indeed, was planned so as to consist of - genocidal levels of civilian casualties. Generals such as Curtis LeMay experienced remarkably little difficulty in accommodating themselves to this likelihood.

Not so the prospective casualties themselves, who joined CND in their thousands, with membership peaking at times of particularly obvious crisis. Officials spoke the language of deterrence in response, but the language of deterrence was a lie. And, as so often, it was precisely the pervasive and official nature of the lie which created scope for the opposition to speak the truth with such vivid force. In short, the Cold War anti-nuclear movement was entirely right about the logic of the nuclear threat, and its derisive opponents were naively and entirely wrong.

In between the obvious crises, in periods of relative public complacency about nuclear weapons, CND’s focus tended to diversify still further from its original narrow scope, and it campaigned on conventional wars such as those in Vietnam, and for peace more generally.

CND's involvement in the present-day Stop the War movement is therefore not a change of direction so much as a continuation of an old cycle (itself hotly debated within the campaign).

But, by the same token, another return to a more narrowly nuclear focus would be a far from surprising progression because the current climate of public complacency about nuclear weapons is as misplaced today as it always was. Cold War deterrence was the pretext, rather than the cause, of the arms race, and the bomb remains what it always was: an offensive weapon, meant for use, not for show. The Non-Proliferation Treaty is scorned, old nuclear states are re-arming, new ones are emerging, and there is now a threat of the non-state or "terrorist" nuclear attack. As in previous years, there is a resolutely pro-nuclear Labour party in government, frustrating the hopes of many who voted for it; there is misleading rhetoric about self-defence against terrorism and evil (an "axis" rather than an "empire") disguising the complexities of many-sided and thoroughly political conflicts.

Given that there is also a hostile media environment and a looming, barely legal clampdown on internal protest within Britain, what is striking in all this is how much hasn't changed since 1958. But in 2005, the time is more than ripe for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament to campaign once again for nuclear disarmament.

So it is hardly surprising that this book should be what its subtitle suggests: a taking stock for future action, as much as a simple review of the past. As such, it puts the case for the broad, inclusive, politicised approach. In many ways it is not detailed enough to stand as the fully definitive history which this vital campaign (vital in all senses) certainly deserves. In other ways it seems almost too detailed. There seems little point in giving a fairly full account of the

causes of the Vietnam war, the 1945 US atomic bombings, or the Project for the New American Century, but not a more detailed account of CND's internal structure and development. The general topics are already extensively written about, there is no scope to develop an original or detailed critique of them here, and CND itself by contrast has not been written up in much detail - as far as I know. The broad scope of the book makes it a general survey of the movement's development which looks as much to the political and social context as to the weapons themselves, or the actions taken against them.

But, considered as such, it is an engaging and informative read. It tells a story which needs telling in some form. It's a good start towards that definitive history and it's a valuable resource for twenty-first century movements for peace and justice. "Now More Than Ever" indeed.



*CND: Now more than ever - the story of a peace movement*, Kate Hudson, Vision Paperbacks, 2005  
 isbn 1-904132-69-3  
 278pp £10.99  
 (paperback)

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John Collins, canon of St Paul's cathedral, resigned the chair of CND in 1964, complaining about the movement's slide towards "neo-Tolstoian anarchy" and "disruption of the body politic." (He became a prominent anti-apartheid activist, and, in a resonant irony, his son Andrew became the high court judge who was later to refuse the Peace Tax Seven's appeal in July 2005.)

Meanwhile, however, the broad, politically engaged protest, censured by the elder Collins, thrived. It made a global icon of Gerald Holtom's 1958 CND symbol. But the tension between broad and narrow approaches continued throughout the history of CND, and it is the broad approach which Kate Hudson, CND's current chair, articulates in this timely book.

CND was the product of Cold War anxieties, arising in reaction to a failed 1959 attempt to shift Labour towards unilateral disarmament. At

first, it concentrated on political work, continuing to support Labour until 1962 - in the hope of changing their nuclear policy after an election win.

Long before Labour's brief unilateralism of the 1980s, the anti-nuclear movement's emphasis had shifted from politics towards direct action. CND itself - unlike its individual members - always maintained a supportive but rather semi-detached relationship with many of the big anti-nuclear direct actions, against bomb bases at Holy Loch, Faslane, Greenham Common, and Molesworth. Much of the Campaign's own work involved lobbying in the Labour party and trades union movement. Even the Aldermaston marches were not officially CND events.

But campaigners who, like John Collins, were "not in favour of civil disobedience or sabotage so long as as reasonable opportunities /to page 6

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