



# conscience update

newsletter of **conscience** THE PEACE TAX CAMPAIGN  
issue 133 spring 2007



**conscience**  
THE PEACE TAX CAMPAIGN

**conscience** update  
(issn 1474-8789) is  
the newsletter of  
**conscience** THE  
PEACE TAX CAMPAIGN

**edited by** Nick  
Wilson **designed by**  
Richie Andrew  
**printed** on 100%  
recycled paper  
**cover** your taxes, up  
in smoke

**views** expressed in  
this newsletter and in  
any leaflets enclosed  
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are included in the  
newsletter to gain  
return publicity for  
**conscience**

# welcome

This new-format issue of **conscience update** is bursting with good news about recent progress in the campaign. The compact size is partly down to changes in postage, but is also better for street campaigning and stalls. We hope you enjoy it.

Nick Wilson  
Communications and Fundraising Officer

## about us

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

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# clare short supports conscience

This session of parliament has been very successful for **conscience**. After talks with us, Clare Short, former Secretary of State for International Development and now an Independent Labour MP, came out in clear support, saying ‘People of conscience and moral conviction are precious. Without them life gets ever more brutal. The Government should recognise their right not to pay for the military in general or more particularly the war in Iraq or



**Clare Short** *ePolitix.com*

the replacement of Trident.’ This is important coming from someone who has had to make real-life decisions about military intervention versus peacebuilding, and has detailed knowledge of the different results. We have also had very positive meetings with other MPs including Hywel Williams (Plaid Cymru), and David Lepper (Labour) and lots of ongoing contact with elected representatives around the country.

## on the streets

On 24th February **conscience** had a day out at the noisy national demonstration against the renewal of Trident nuclear weapons and current policy in Iraq. Veteran campaigner Paula Hollings says ‘this big action showed how many people

want their taxes to be used to nurture peace, not pay for war and for preparations for Armageddon. Especially as the knowledge and practice of peacebuilding is increasing rapidly, but is still terribly underfunded.’

# form a line

Those of you who are self-employed are probably still reeling from the annual rush to send in your government tax return. But now those with employers, the retired, the unemployed and even under-18's can join in the fun and remind the powers that be that there are huge numbers who would prefer their taxes to be spent on peacebuilding, not war.

With this newsletter you will find our spoof Peace Tax Return ('How to Avoid Paying for War'). Taxpayer or not, employed or self-employed, please take a moment to complete Part A and send it to the Paymaster General (details on the form).

## autumn appeal

Thanks to all who responded so promptly to our last appeal, the most successful since just before the Iraq invasion. Your generosity enables us to pay for things such as the wallet cards advertising [peacepays.org](http://peacepays.org), used in our student campaign (see page 5).



## Grim Reaper at the Treasury

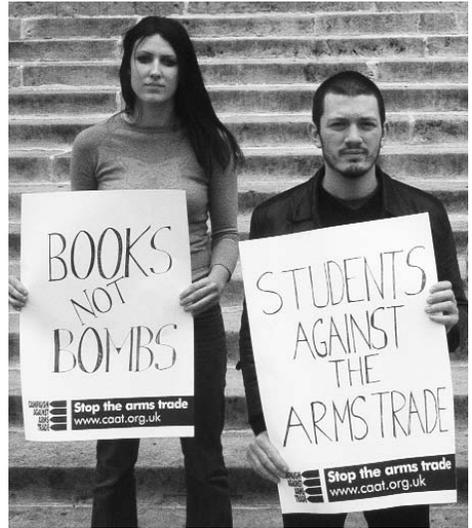
If you are self-employed and are thinking of taking the next step and withholding the military part of your taxes, you can complete Part B of the Peace Tax Return ready to send with your next official tax return. If you need advice, call or email our campaigner Symon Hill.

*If you use any part of the Peace Tax Return, please send us the Freepost slip from the foot of the leaflet so that we can judge our impact. In May we will draw out one of these slips and post the sender the book 'Some of the people all the time', reviewed on page 10.*

# student support

MPs listen most closely when a campaign has large public support. On that note, we have been busy drawing in new and younger supporters at student fayres, including the largest in the country at the University of London. Hundreds of students from a variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds signed up for email updates and many more took away cards advertising our innovative website, [peacepays.org](http://peacepays.org)

Communications Officer Nick Wilson says 'Full time students don't pay income tax, but these days many work before studying or combine study with work, and all pay VAT. Lots of students are therefore well aware that their money, now and in the future, supports a world system based on military force. As for alleged student apathy, there is currently massive protest across the country against universities who invest student fees in arms companies'. One student who recently joined [conscience](http://conscience.org) adds 'People forget that 18-year-olds were



**Students protesting about arms investment by universities** CAAT

babies when the Berlin wall fell, and just 13 during 9/11. Their teens have been full of the War on Terror and they are thirsty for alternatives. The [peacepays](http://peacepays.org) website is great because students and young people in particular now spend a lot of their work and leisure on the internet, get most of their information from it, and often copy webpages to their friends. This can create great publicity for a campaign.'

# international campaigning

In October **conscience** attended the 11th International Conference on War Tax Resistance and Peace Tax Campaigns in Berlin.

Campaigner Symon Hill says 'with activists from Europe, Africa, Asia and North America, the conference showed how fiscal resistance to militarism is evolving. In some countries the refusal to pay for the military still goes hand in hand with resisting physical conscription.

But where the draft is long gone things have moved on to the much-needed next stage, with the refusal to pay going hand in hand with showing the public and policy-

makers that there are peacebuilding alternatives ready to go.' Many at the conference were excited by the lead that **conscience** is taking – supporting the Peace Tax Seven's case against military taxes at the European Court of Human Rights, while pushing the peacebuilding alternatives through the **peacepays.org** website and through the Peace and Security Liaison Group's quiet talks with government. Because of this, **conscience** was chosen to host the next conference in the UK in 2008. If you are interested in helping to organise it, please contact the office.

## email bulletin goes live

A flood of interest from younger people following our student campaigning means we now have a critical mass of email addresses for our short email alerts. These draw attention to war tax court appearances and other sudden

actions that are over long before the next conscience update. To subscribe, send an email with the subject 'subscribe conscience\_news' to [listserv@conscienceonline.org.uk](mailto:listserv@conscienceonline.org.uk). Addresses are kept private and you can unsubscribe at any time.

# what should we do instead?

Many of you know that in 2004 **conscience** initiated the Peace and Security Liaison Group to enhance our objection to military taxes by encouraging policy-shapers to back the many peacebuilding alternatives. The Group brings together twelve non-governmental organisations with respected expertise in arms control and disarmament, conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and training in civilian peace work, conflict resolution and transformation. Together, they build long-term contacts with civil and military decision makers to exchange views, share information, and influence the shift towards peacebuilding. We are now very pleased to announce that the Group's crucial role has been recognised with extended funding from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and major new backing from the Allan and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust and the Polden-Puckham Charitable Foundation. These important behind-the-scenes efforts will now continue until at least 2009.

## huge response

Many thanks to all who returned the 2006 Membership Questionnaire. There were two and a half times as many responses as normal! This is an important part of our accountability to you, and a chance to check what you need from us. Many of you asked for extra materials and support for your own local events, or signed up to be campaigners in your area. Dr Richard Lawson of Somerset was picked at random from the respondents and received an unexpected Christmas book – *The Bush Agenda* by US economist Antonia Juhasz.

## volunteers

Special thanks to everyone who recently volunteered specialist help – we will be in touch. But we still need London people who can spare a few hours once every few months to join our band of mailing stuffers. This is essential work and frees paid staff for more campaigning. Please call us!



## new faces

**Nick, Paula and Simon hard at work** *Davey Peacock*

At a time when people are increasingly aware of the links between the different problems facing the world, we have had an influx of staff with useful experience in wider campaigns. Office co-ordinator and general lynchpin Paula Hollings previously organised Green Alliance and the Tibet Vigil and is very active in grassroots peace and environmental work. She is joined by Nick Wilson, who has worked on human rights and grassroots peacebuilding in the Balkans and mediation and restorative justice in the UK, and now handles our communications and fundraising. We also have a new

campaigner. Symon Hill previously gave professional campaign advice to London students and worked with Christian groups including the Student Christian Movement. He also handles the media for Campaign Against Arms Trade and other groups. Meanwhile Sarah Graham-Brown continues to run the Peace and Security Liaison Group, using expertise from long involvement with the Middle East, including Iraq Body Count. Former staff Jon Nott and Oliver Haslam are also still close – Jon at the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and Oliver as a web designer working with peace groups.

# a bomb of our own

## **Some of the people all the time**

Alastair Mackie, Book Guild, 2006

isbn 1-84624-056-5, 352pp, £17.99

Reviewed by Nick Wilson

As the government prepares to blow billions of pounds in taxes to replace Trident it would do well to listen to former Air Commodore Alistair Mackie. After 28 years in the RAF, including flying and commanding Vulcan nuclear bombers, Mackie left in disgust at 'Britain's idiotic nuclear so-called deterrent' and is now a Vice-President of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

This autobiography book starts with his privileged childhood, then his time as a young pilot dropping bombs over wartime North Africa, commandos on D-Day, and supplies to the disastrous 'bridge too far' at Arnhem. Escaping fatherly expectations of a career in medicine, Mackie then spent years flying new-fangled jets around the globe, working in military intelligence in Singapore, and rising through the ranks to command the first British nuclear squadron.

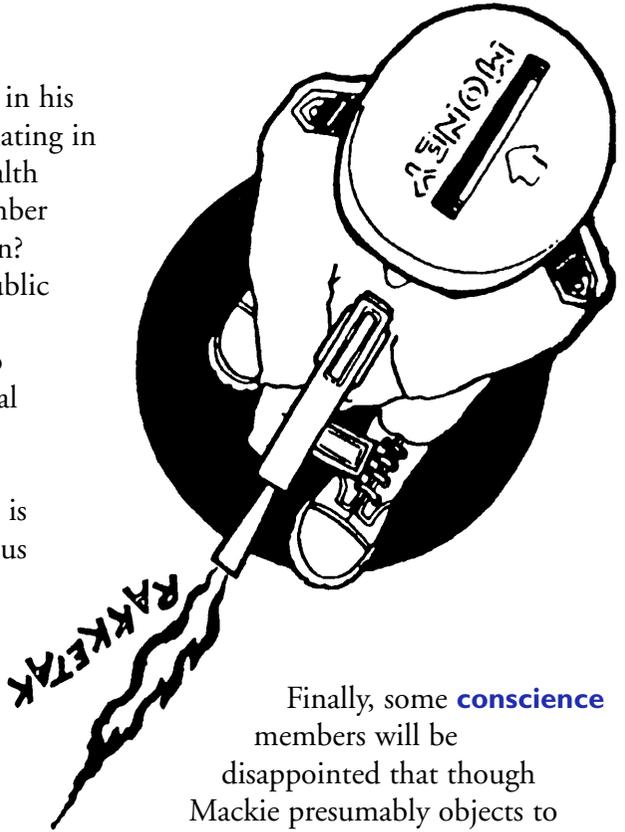
However, as he became privy to the technical and tactical facts, he also became worried by 'gung-ho' politicians 'blind to the realities of what the consequences of a nuclear strike and retaliation would be'. His concerns grew in well-informed positions as co-director of the Joint Services Staff College and as Deputy Secretary of the Joint Intelligence Committee during the Cuban Missile Crisis. More and more, it seemed to Mackie that a misplaced sense of the UK's importance was leading politicians to support an 'independent nuclear deterrent' that was in fact built by, leased from and maintained by the USA, and therefore tied us to US mis-analysis of the global situation. In fact, he says, 'Britain's Bomb, far from being a deterrent, fostered the very threat it was supposed to fend'.

Ironically, Mackie's career after his resignation from the RAF is the least interesting section for those focussed on peace and security issues.

[Continued overleaf](#)

But there is enough interest in his various civilian jobs, culminating in Director General of the Health Education Council – remember the poster of a pregnant man? And it was his interest in public health and the law that eventually brought him into open opposition to the illegal Bomb in the Reagan era.

Now in his eighties, Mackie is very honest about the nervous exhaustion that hit after years of anti-nuclear work. He puts it down to hereditary depression. But his stance must have conflicted greatly with some aspects of his upbringing, and many of his ex-colleagues considered him a traitor. This must have taken a toll. Also, activism requires a subtle mix of arrogance and humility. Arrogance to get you going, quickly diluted with a large dose of humility and long-haul teamwork. As a self-styled ‘battler Briton’, I wondered whether Mackie was programmed to burn out.



Finally, some **conscience** members will be disappointed that though Mackie presumably objects to having his taxes spent on nuclear weapons, he is not averse to military spending as such. Yet the movement to redefine common sense on peace and security will not succeed by subjecting people like him to righteous disapproval, but rather by trying to understand their position. This book helps us to do that.

*See page 4 for a chance to win this book.*

# a life of conscience

In November Marian Franz died of cancer aged 76. For 24 years Marian directed our US sister organisation, the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund and was also a founder and former chair of our global alliance, the Conscience and Peace Tax International.

A Mennonite, she had worked alongside Martin Luther King Jr in the civil rights movement, in religious education, and in supporting US public servants to remember deeper values in their decision-making. Of war taxes, she said: 'They kill twice'. 'First, they directly enable war'. 'Second, taxes allocated for war represent a distortion of priorities. Money is taken away from the important work of healing and is spent to destroy and kill.'

See a detailed obituary on the US website [www.peacetaxfund.org](http://www.peacetaxfund.org)



**Marian at the UN in New York**

## conscience labels

Our pads of 100 envelope reuse labels are a great way to save resources while promoting **conscience**. They are free from the office but we welcome donations towards the £3 cost of printing and postage.

# join **conscience** today

I/we want to join **conscience**       I/we want to renew my/our membership

please PRINT your details below

first name/s \_\_\_\_\_ last name/s \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ postcode \_\_\_\_\_

telephone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

**suggested annual membership donation** £1 per £1,000 of annual income up to £15,000, plus £2 per £1,000 of annual income over £15,000

I enclose a cheque for £\_\_\_\_\_ (payable to **conscience**)

**help us plan ahead** – instead of writing a cheque, you could join with a standing order, which saves us time and money for campaigning. just £3 a month can make a huge difference. If you give £5 a month or more, we'll also send you a free copy of Peretz Kidron's *Refusenik! Israel's Soldiers of Conscience*

## standing order

please PRINT your details below

name of bank \_\_\_\_\_ address of bank \_\_\_\_\_

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account number  sort code

please pay £10  £5  £3  other £\_\_\_\_\_ monthly until further notice, starting on

\_\_\_\_\_ payable to **conscience** a/c 50452200 s/c 08-90-37,

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please cancel any existing standing orders to **conscience**/the peace tax campaign

signature

date

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We treat all your information in confidence and do not share it with other organisations or individuals.

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