



conscience update

hot news from **conscience** THE PEACE TAX CAMPAIGN
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conscience
THE PEACE TAX CAMPAIGN

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views expressed herein and in any leaflets enclosed do not necessarily reflect

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welcome

This **conscience update** comes packed with news. Following the recent Conscientious Objectors' Day we are warming up for this September's International Conference on War tax Resistance and Peace Tax Campaigns. Meanwhile, new directions in our online campaigning are catching the wave of public anger at paying for war while peacebuilding goes begging. There is also a **peacepays.org** action for you to take, a chance to scrutinise how we spend your donations, news of support from some unusual quarters, and a high-profile accolade for one of our campaigners!

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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conscientious objectors' day – ten years on

On May 15, the tenth annual international conscientious objectors' day ceremony was held at the objectors' memorial stone in central London. In a moving event, the names of fifty past and present objectors were read out amid steady rain, while members of **conscience**, Amnesty International, CND, the Peace Pledge Union, Right to Refuse to Kill and the British Humanist Association placed a flower for each objector.

Conscientious objectors' day grew out of international activism in the 1980s and 90s in support of those, from Central Asia to Angola, who suffer daily for their refusal to fight. The diversity of names read out at the Tavistock Square memorial made clear that the right to refuse to fight is still dismissed by several states all over the world.

The day was also an opportunity to remember past objectors. Including the 16,000 British men who refused to fight in World War One, seventy-three of whom died of ill treatment,



Jez Smith

the 60,000 who refused in World War Two, and the 10,000 who objected to National Service up to 1960.

To find out more about Conscientious Objectors' Day go to www.ppu.org.uk/cosx/costemp/co_day1.html. For more about current objectors abroad see www.ppu.org.uk/coproject/cotoday.html

conscience goes global

Even if you aren't a regular internet user, younger relatives will certainly know about the 'social networking' website, Facebook. Started in the US as a web-based college yearbook, Facebook is now the world's sixth most popular website, with over 70 million users – 8 million of them in the UK. That's a fifth of the British workforce.

Email and special-interest websites already let users link to each other and create groups to share ideas. But Facebook is so popular because it allows you to create your own private page and link it with those of friends and acquaintances, making it easy to keep track of people from all aspects of your life and from all over the world. Every day, 'Facebookers' add 14 million photos to the site.

Given the vast potential audience, here at **conscience** we have been using Facebook to promote our non-military security website, **peacepays.org**, placing links on

scores of like-minded (and hostile) Facebook groups. This has resulted in a marked spike in visits to **peacepays**. At the same time, **conscience** member Asif Naqvi, who works for the Overseas Development Institute in London, set up our own Facebook page. He



says: 'I started the group to have a friendly place where people with an interest in alternatives to war as well as an understanding of the

importance of freedom of conscience could meet and talk. These issues are of such obvious relevance I felt there should be a space for them on Facebook. I also fancied being part of a group that is humorous and thought-provoking.'

To join the group, go to www.facebook.com, click the 'sign up' button to create your Facebook page, then use the search box to find the group 'conscience – The Peace Tax Campaign'.

army doctor supports conscience

An unusually large number of **conscience** members are medical doctors. Many of you object to working for health while paying for war. But in our recent Peace Tax Return action, one member revealed that though she was trained as a GP, she is also an ex-Army doctor, led the first British peacekeeping troops into Former Yugoslavia, and is still in the Army reserve.

In view of her position she amended her Peace Tax Return, telling the Treasury: 'I don't think I can say that I conscientiously object to war. But what I do object to is the paltry sum spent on peacebuilding and conflict resolution'. She went on: 'I agree that there should be a right to hypothecate* the war element of taxes, and that the issue of taxes for war is completely different from lack of control over how much money goes to health, education, housing, the environment, benefits etc from our taxes'.

Such contacts with our members make it clear that **conscience** has

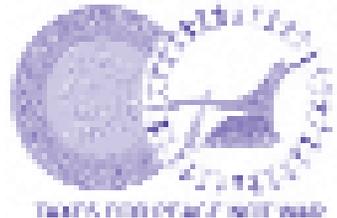


home.att.net/~Berliner-Ultrasonics/meecdinky.html

very diverse support. Some of you are pacifists. Others see some role for the military. Yet all are aghast at the ongoing over-reliance on the use of force by unimaginative politicians. Especially while peacebuilding goes begging. It is hardly surprising that this view is shared by some of those who have firsthand experience of the human cost of war and are in the front line when we go to war. This correspondent signed off: 'More power to your elbow!'

** 'Hypothecation' is the diversion of tax to a particular purpose, such as our proposed peacebuilding fund.*

12th international conference on war tax resistance and peace tax campaigns



We are now in the final run up to the twelfth International Conference on War Tax Resistance and Peace Tax Campaigns, which brings together activists from our sister campaigns in sixteen countries around the world, from India and Canada to Australia and Colombia. The conference only happens every two years and was last in the UK in 1996, so this is a rare chance for you to see firsthand how much progress is being made around the planet.

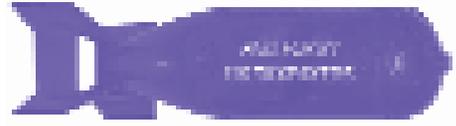
The conference, themed Taxes for Peace not War, will be hosted by **conscience** at elegant Ashburne Hall on Manchester University's Fallowfield campus from the evening of Friday 5th September to 4pm on Sunday 7th. There is comfortable accommodation for those who need it. It is also possible to come as daytime participant.

The keynote speaker, Professor Paul Rogers of the University of Bradford Peace Studies Department, will be talking about the concrete actions needed to create real global security in the century ahead. We also hope to have a good turnout of **conscience** members to support the foreign activists, some of whom still face physical conscription. But places are filling up fast, so if you are interested please book by 1st July. A letter is enclosed with full details of the conference agenda and costs. To book, contact the office or go to www.peacetax2008.org.uk

Apologies! In the last update we mistakenly gave the date of the conference as October.

peace pays. pass it on...

Last year alone, there were forty-two thousand hits on our inspirational website, peacepays.org. Many of these people visited the site after seeing the vivid bomb logo online or in the street. So with this issue of **conscience update** we are enclosing a piece of material with the logo and setting you a challenge – to put it where the maximum number of people will see it. Pop it in your bag. Take it to work. Pin it on a noticeboard. Blu-tac it to a wall. Leave it in a waiting-room. Tuck it into an advert on the train. Wherever you put it, make sure



people can get at the web address. And if they take the whole thing home, that's great too! If you're particularly proud of your chosen location, send us a picture. With military excesses so obviously contributing to the problems they are meant to solve, there is huge public interest in real security alternatives. So let's tell people where to find out about them!

peace tax returns

This Spring saw a bumper crop of Peace Tax Returns in our annual action targeting the Treasury. Including a lot from non-members. Many thanks for all your efforts in distributing them in workplaces, religious groups and elsewhere. As promised, two respondents received prizes. Having never won a draw before, Michael Southgate of

Kingston was surprised to have his name pulled out at random to receive *Atomic Bazaar*, a sobering account of how nuclear weapons are spreading around the world. And Geoff Hemingway of Leigh-on-Sea won *Now More than Ever*, the story of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

for king and country

The Oxford Union is one of the best-known debating societies in the world. In 1933 it held a famously controversial debate on the motion ‘This house would under no circumstances fight for King and country’. Two-thirds of those present supported the motion, causing a political storm.

This February the debate was held again, seventy-five years later. The original vote was partly a protest against blind patriotism by those who had paid for it on the battlefields of the First World War. But since then, there has been a huge expansion of knowledge about how to proactively build peace. This was reflected in the speech by triple Nobel Prize nominee Dr Scilla Elworthy, the founder of the Oxford Research Group and the chair of Peace Direct, both of which are members of the ground-breaking Peace and Security Liaison Group set up by **conscience**. Here are some brief excerpts.



‘I am not a pacifist... I am not going to talk about morality. I’m going to talk facts – six practical reasons why this house should not fight for Queen and country.’

1 The nature of war has changed. 100 years ago 80% of those killed in war were combatants, 20% were civilians. Today that ratio has reversed.

2 Fighting in war makes you more likely to kill yourself. At least 6,256 US veterans took their lives in 2005 alone.

3 War is neither an efficient nor effective method of resolving conflict. Between 2000 and 2005, 17 conflicts ended in negotiated settlements; just four ended in military victory... Last time I did the sums, the amount that the UK Government devoted to conflict prevention and conflict resolution was minute... less than 2% of what we were then spending on military measures.

4 **War consumes stupendous amounts of money that could be used to address the roots of conflict.**

The war in Iraq has cost the US taxpayer \$491 billion dollars... Clean water and sanitation could be provided for everyone in the world for 9 billion dollars annually.

5 **Does war-fighting serve the main purpose of UK/US defence policy: fighting terrorism? No. The use of force increases terrorism.**

Here is U.S. Army Col. Douglas A. Macgregor: “Most of the generals and politicians did not think through the consequences of compelling American soldiers with no knowledge of Arabic or Arab culture to implement intrusive measures inside an Islamic society... our soldiers killed, maimed and incarcerated thousands of Arabs, 90% of whom were not the enemy. But they are now.”

6 **Does war-fighting serve the second main US/UK defence purpose: spreading democracy? No. Non-violence works better.**

Recent research compared the outcomes of 285 non-violent and violent campaigns to resist dictatorship in the 20th century and

found that “major non-violent campaigns have achieved success 55% of the time, compared to 28.4% for violent resistance campaigns.”

Dr Elworthy concluded: ‘It is becoming increasingly clear that the main threats we face today are not from outside but from within. It is our own profligate lifestyles that are causing the global catastrophes (climate change, resource depletion, poverty, etc.) that endanger human life and civilisation. Currently Britain is a very large part of the problem, and a very tiny part of the solution.’

All this speaks strongly in favour of Peace Direct’s action to support grassroots peacebuilders around the world, Oxford Research Group’s efforts to bring leaders together, and our own campaign for the right to pay your taxes towards tried-and-tested peacebuilding. Jot these six points on the back of your hand - and woe betide anyone who tells you that war works!

For the whole speech, see www.peacedirect.org/latest-news/Scilla_speech.html

last trench soldier condemns war

Aged 110 this June, Harry Patch is famous as the last man anywhere in the world to have fought in the trenches of the First World War. But despite attempts to co-opt him into the sort of military remembrance that never questions the status quo, this ex-conscript has used the unexpected spotlight to stubbornly condemn war as ‘the calculated and condoned slaughter of human beings’.

Harry grew up in what he calls North Somerset ‘Quaker country’, with firms like Clarks dominating local industry. But he himself was raised as a King-and-country village Anglican, without the political environment or education that caused others to conscientiously object. Even so, he wasn’t keen to go to war. ‘I had no inclination to fight anybody. Why should I go out and kill somebody I never knew? I wasn’t patriotic at all.’ So, when he was wrenched from his plumbing apprenticeship and sent to the Western Front, Harry resolved to do ‘what was asked of me and no more’.

In 1917 he joined a five-man machine-gun team for the months-long Battle of Passchendaele, where he found that his new comrades were actively resisting the demand to dehumanise the enemy and themselves. The lead gunner immediately took Harry, a good shot, aside and told him: ‘We fire short, have them in the legs, or fire over their heads, but not to kill, not unless it’s them or us’. This compromise won’t please everyone, but in the circumstances it could easily have cost them their lives, or got them shot out of hand by their own officers. Even when surprised by a hidden German with a fixed bayonet, Harry kept the pact. ‘I had four seconds to make up my mind. I had three rounds in that revolver. I could have killed him with my first; I was a crack shot. What should I do? I shot him above the ankle, and above the knee.’ ‘He would be picked up by stretcher bearers and at the end of the war he would rejoin his family. Perhaps he was married; perhaps he had children.’



Harry Patch

As the months passed, thousands drowned in the sucking mud. 'It wasn't a case of seeing them with a nice bullet hole in their tunic, far from it, and there I was, only nineteen years old. I felt sick.' Everyone wondered: 'How long is it before I get hit? Not if, but when'. Then one evening a shell fell among Harry's close-knit team, killing all but two instantly.

Released from hospital a year later, Harry's childhood faith was

'shattered'. Then, as he was due to go back to France, the armistice was declared. 'I was thoroughly disillusioned. Why did we fight? The peace was settled round a table, so why the hell couldn't they do that at the start, without losing millions of men?' Especially since, as he points out, the King and Kaiser were cousins. Waiting months for demobilisation crystallised such anger. Harry's was one of many units that mutinied after the war, facing down a bullying officer's threat to shoot them by levelling thirty rifles back at him.

After the war, Harry went back to plumbing. It was only in 1998, with Great War veterans dwindling, that he was discovered by the media and forced to confront his war experience. As the last few survivors have died off, the focus on him has steadily increased. But he has always resisted attempts to mould him, bluntly telling Tony Blair to pardon those shot for cowardice and denouncing business-as-usual Remembrance Day as 'nothing but a show of military force' and 'show business'. He has also made it very clear that war trauma lasts a lifetime – however long that may be. Even as a centenarian: 'If I was half asleep and half awake, I was back on that



Passchendaele battlefield *Library and Archives Canada*

battlefield'. And when he finally plucked up the courage to revisit the place where his team were killed: 'the memories flooded back and I wept'. Yet at 106 he still chose to meet and befriend the last remaining German gunner from the First World War, who fought at Passchendaele and may even have fired the shell that killed his team.

Harry's view that 'the politicians who took us to war should have been given the guns and told to settle their differences themselves' isn't meant as a comprehensive solution to the complexities of global insecurity. But, like his assertions that war is 'nothing better than legalised mass murder' and 'isn't worth one life', it is a powerful statement from someone who could easily have hidden in the sort of remembrance that never questions root causes and so dooms a

succession of modern-day nineteen-year-olds to be similarly maimed and killed.

We have two copies to give away of *The Last Fighting Tommy* by Harry Patch and Richard van Emden. For the chance to win one, send us a note by 11 July with your name, address and the dates of this year's International Conference on War Tax Resistance and Peace Tax Campaigns. Our address is on page 2.

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.

our hero!

Until the middle of 2007, **conscience** shared Campaigns Officer Symon Hill with our friends at Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT). Just after the last issue of **conscience update**, comedian and political activist Mark Thomas nominated our Symon as one of *The Independent* newspaper's Heroes of 2007, along with Nicholas Hildyard, founder of The Corner House group, which focuses on human rights and the environment.

According to Mark Thomas: 'Nick and Symon represent organisations full of heroic people doing brilliant work. And, this year, the things they have been campaigning for so tirelessly are starting to bear fruit. Take the Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO). Since 1966 it has sought to promote the British arms industry abroad. But it works inside the Ministry of Defence and is headed by an arms industry executive. There's a conflict of interest and the amazing thing is that, after years of campaigning by Symon and others, Gordon Brown



has now announced that DESO will close. Another thing Nick and Symon have been very active in is bringing a court case against the Serious Fraud Office. When Blair put pressure on the Serious Fraud Office to shut down the investigation into allegations of bribery between BAE Systems and Saudi Arabia to secure deals, Corner House and CAAT turned round and said, no, we're going to fight you on this, because everybody should be equal before the law.'

We are very proud of Symon, who continues to back **conscience** as a member. You can see the whole story at www.independent.co.uk/news/people/heroes-of-2007-our-panel-pick-their-inspirational-people-of-the-year-766574.html

how we spent your money in 2007

membership and fundraising

Most of our income in 2007 came from member donations to appeals and 2,416 member subscriptions. We continue to receive a small annual grant from Quaker Peace and Social Witness. In 2007 the Peace and Security Liaison Group also got generous ongoing funding from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, Allan and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust and the Polden-Puckham Charitable Foundation.

staff

Paula Hollings Office Co-ordination and Membership

Sarah Graham-Brown Peace and Security Liaison Group

Nick Wilson Campaigns, Communications and Fundraising

We continue to draw on the expertise of past staff. Ex-campaigner Oliver Haslam does

much of our web design. His successor Symon Hill is Press Officer at Campaign Against Arms Trade, Kat Barton runs the Disarm programme at Quaker Peace and Social Witness, and our former Development Officer Jon Nott heads the Green Party office next door.

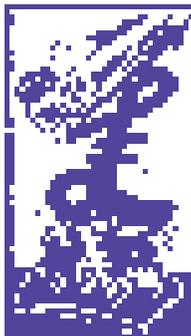
volunteers

Pauline Atkins, Helen Dymond, Pete Hall, Caroline Hume, Tony Lamb, Nikki Packham and Alison Turner all helped in the office. Thank you.

executive committee

In 2007 the voluntary committee included Sinead Allan, Robin Brookes, Monica Frisch, Mary Lou Leavitt, Roy Prockter, Phil Rimmer, Adam Simon (to November) and Kiri Smith (representative of Quaker Peace and Social Witness to November). From September they were joined by Simon Heywood, a member of the Peace Tax Seven who

was also a Quaker Peacemaker with us in 2005, developing the peacepays.org website.



conscience is not a charity, but we still produce transparent public accounts that meet charity law. You can get full accounts from the office, but here is a summary.

statement of financial activities for the year ending 31.12.07

	2007 unrestricted £	2007 restricted £	2007 total £	2006 total £
incoming resources				
donations and legacies	47,977	-	47,977	54,361
grants	8,500	28,870	37,370	50,900
interest receivable	858	-	858	250
sundry	14	1,300	1,314	2,367
total incoming resources	57,349	30,170	87,519	107,878
outgoing resources				
membership support	(3,011)	(2,839)	(5,850)	(10,776)
office costs	(3,751)	(1,700)	(5,451)	(3,516)
premises costs	(3,421)	(1,000)	(4,421)	(3,929)
staffing costs	(36,739)	(21,216)	(57,955)	(59,710)
costs in furtherance of objects	(46,922)	(26,755)	(73,677)	(77,931)
fundraising costs	(685)	-	(685)	(602)
membership recruitment	(970)	-	(970)	(466)
governance costs	(4,887)	(558)	(5,445)	(9,029)
total outgoing resources	(53,464)	(27,313)	(80,777)	(88,028)
net incoming/(outgoing) funds	3,885	2,857	6,742	19,850
total funds brought forward	21,051	26,085	47,136	27,286
total funds carried forward	24,936	28,942	53,878	47,136

These figures will be reformatted to comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities 2005, then examined.

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 _____

_____ postcode _____

account number

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 sort code

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please pay £10 £5 £3 other £_____ monthly until further notice, starting on _____ payable to **conscience** a/c 50452200 s/c 08-90-37,

Co-op Bank, Wood Green, London

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

signature

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date

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please return to **conscience**, FREEPOST LON 18505, London N19 5BR

NLI35

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

