

MILITARY SERVICE ACT, 1916

Every man to whom the Act applies will on Thursday, March 2nd, be deemed to have enlisted for the period of the War unless he is excepted or exempt.

Any man who has adequate grounds for applying to a Local Tribunal for a

CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION UNDER THIS ACT

Must do so BEFORE
THURSDAY, MARCH 2

They said it was impossible then.
Let's finish what we started.



**conscience
update**

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Issue 148

100YearsofConscience

An Idea Whose Time Has Come

We believe that any individual in our society should, on the grounds of conscience, be free not to pay for Britain's involvement in armed conflict. On March 2nd 1916 the right was won for all citizens to be able to apply for an exemption from military service. Even after a 100 years we are still financially conscripted into wars that our consciences cannot support.

Next year on March 2nd we want to commemorate the centenary of the 1916 Military Service Act by having our Taxes for Peace Bill read in Parliament, which would extend conscientious objection to our income taxes.

This could be a seminal moment in British politics, as for the first time war would be fought and funded with the explicit consent of tax payers, while those who do not want war would no longer be forced to pay for it.

It would also mean a massive boost for the sectors that provide the most valuable form of security: world class investment in diplomacy; making sure we talk to our enemies rather than destroy them; helping to develop fragile economies so we can combat the scarcity and desperation that drives people into conflict with one another; dealing with climate change which puts pressures on food resources in the world's most war-torn nations and a clear plan for investing in peace, stability and security.

All of this is possible and at **conscience** we've been working hard to make this a reality. We attended the Labour Party Conference in Brighton just a few weeks ago and met with MPs, campaign groups and organisations who support our work.

But we need your help

conscience will be rallying support for our Bill from across the

political spectrum, but we need YOU to write to your MP and let them know that your rights to conscientious objection are not being recognised.

Over the next few months we will be looking to mobilise as much support from across the country as possible. **If you are a member of a local group or organisation we want to hear from you - maybe they could support us to make our Bill become law.**

The best way to remember #100YearsofConscience is not just to commemorate the event, but to build and expand on what conscientious objection means in the 21st Century.

The Taxes for Peace Bill will move us closer than we have ever been to getting the UK government to recognise that to pay for war is to be complicit in it.

conscience supporter Jeremy Corbyn MP elected leader of the Labour Party

Peace campaigner and long-standing supporter of **conscience**, Jeremy Corbyn MP, has achieved a stunning victory in the Labour leadership election - despite starting the contest as an outsider. Jeremy won with a substantial mandate securing 59% of the vote in the contest.

Jeremy has supported Peace Tax legislation at every reading since he became an MP and, perhaps most importantly of all, is **conscience**'s local constituency MP.

As Jeremy has been deeply involved in peace campaigning for decades we are delighted to have someone who is so closely connected to **conscience** elected.

It remains to be seen what this means for **conscience** or our campaign but we have no doubt this is an exciting moment in UK politics.

We hope that he will continue to support our efforts to ensure conscientious objectors to military taxation get their rights fully recognised in UK law, working with John McDonnell MP, a fellow **conscience** supporter.

Peace Agenda Launched

conscience launched its new London-based peace discussion group, The Peace Agenda, at Friends House in May. Our keynote speaker was Natalie Bennett, Leader of the Green Party, who gave a fascinating speech on the challenges facing peace campaigners.

“When people talk to me about the Iraq war march they often say: ‘but what difference did it make?’ I tell them it made a huge difference when the government voted against bombing Syria.” Natalie Bennett



conscience Campaign Manager Shaughan Dolan with Natalie Bennett (Green Party), Emma Sangster (Forces Watch) and Marigold Bentley (Quaker Peace and Social Witness) at the Peace Agenda launch event

Emma Sangster presented a talk on the creeping militarisation of British culture since the passage of the Armed Forces Covenant in 2011.

Emma showed the way the military are now openly appealing to children. Images of toddlers dressed up in military uniforms to promote Armed Forces Day and school children wearing body armour were harrowing to behold.

We also heard about the fantastic work of Quaker Peace and Social Witness from Marigold Bentley, who talked about her many years of peace work throughout the world.



The speakers and Chair of the Peace Agenda Trident debate: Rebecca Johnson (Move on Trident) Shaughan Dolan (**conscience**), Ruth Cadbury MP, Kate Hudson (CND), Nic Conner (Bow Group), Paul Carroll (Toastmasters) and Jordan Anderson (IHS)

Marigold Bentley represented the Quaker perspective on advancing the cause of peace. She put to the audience that speaking out in favour of peace, and supporting its cultivation, is a religious obligation for Quakers. She reminded us that the Religious Society of Friends has been at the forefront of campaigns to protect the rights of conscientious objectors' movements for centuries.

Marigold took an optimistic note calling attention to the fact that there is such a thing as a 'peace industry' today, that simply did not exist 30 years ago during her time representing Quakers at the United Nations.



Since our launch event we've had two more events at Friends House.

A film evening, where we screened the 'Fog of War', a film about the life of Former US Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. Our most successful event has been a debate on the Trident Nuclear Weapons system which included CND, former staff from the American Embassy, and Ruth Cadbury MP.

It was a very lively evening with Ruth Cadbury stressing that security and stability must come from somewhere other than the permanent threat of nuclear destruction - from economic, political and physical security as well as security of food sources, our health and our climate. She envisioned a future where money is invested in these safeguards, and where conflict transformation and civilian peacebuilding are the priorities - very much in line with the **conscience** view of foreign policy.

In October we will be hosting our next event with Veterans for Peace with former serviceman John Boulton, who will be discussing conscientious objection in the armed services.

The feedback from events has been overwhelmingly positive. If you would like to give us a suggestion for a future event you would like to see please get in contact with us.

If you would like to find out more about our events please join the Peace Agenda Meetup Group at [Meetup.com/The-Peace-Agenda-London/](https://www.meetup.com/The-Peace-Agenda-London/)

Thank you to everyone who has been able come along to our events - we've had people travel from all over the UK to support us. Now that we're tabling our Taxes for Peace Bill next year, there's never been a better time to be involved.

All Change At Conscience

Claire Reddleman, our Fundraising and Development Officer, will be leaving us after 6 years of service. Everyone from the **conscience** team would like to thank Claire for her outstanding contribution to the campaign.



Claire leaves after finishing her Ph.D. to move on to a fundraising role at the Royal Horticultural Society. We wish her the best of luck in an organisation dedicated to making Britain a greener and more beautiful place.

conscience wishes Claire all the best in her new role

conscience has also been awarded a Quaker Peacemaker this year to help on the Taxes for Peace Bill. We would like to welcome Holly Wallis to the team as our new Parliamentary Officer.



Holly told us: "I'm thrilled to have joined **conscience** at such an exciting time. The centenary of the 1916 Military Service Act is fast approaching, and that means we need to make as much noise as possible for the right of conscientious objection to military taxation, and how remembrance can be used as a force for peace."

We look forward to a bright future and a period of renewal at **conscience** with new staff and new ideas.

Holly Wallis joins the **conscience** team

Interested in volunteering at conscience?

conscience is looking for an office volunteer to help with events and office administration. This role would suit an individual who might be looking for experience in the NGO sector. **conscience** will cover reasonable expenses.

If this sounds like you or you know someone who might be interested, get in contact at outreach@conscienceonline.org.uk

Campaign Update

conscience successfully hit and exceeded our target of raising £1,000 so that we could attend the Labour Party conference - many thanks to all of you who donated and made this possible.

This enabled us to raise the issue of peace tax with MPs, campaign groups and Labour Party members. One of the big things to come out of the conference was that we met the Joint Issues Group, an association of UK churches. The Methodist church is interested in backing our campaign and we hope to develop a partnership over the weeks and months ahead.

In addition to this we met with officials from the Independent Commission for Aid Impact in Whitehall to discuss reforms to the Conflict Security and Stability Fund - the UK's biggest non-military security funding programme, so that we can improve the quality of international peacebuilding.

We've given talks to Somerset Peace Groups and attended the Chichester Peace Festival, which included having a stall and giving a short talk at a local Quaker meeting.

We've met with John McDonnell MP and newly elected MPs Catherine West and Ruth Cadbury to discuss how they can support our Taxes for Peace Bill.

conscience in the media

On the Refugee Crisis:

libdemvoice.org/the-independent-view-liberals-need-solutions-to-the-migrant-crisis-and-conflict-prevention-will-be-key

On Mia Tamarin, an Israeli CO:

Huffingtonpost.co.uk/shaughan-dolan/the-story-of-mia-and-the-_b_7278538.html

On **conscience** and the Methodist Church:

<http://methodist-presandvp.blogspot.co.uk/2015/10/conscience-taxes-for-peace-not-war.html>

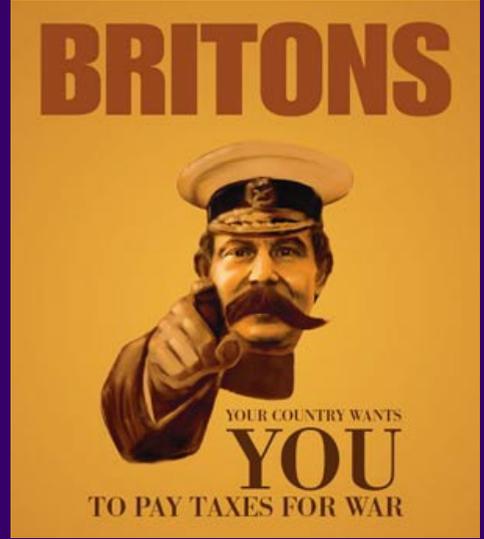
Leave a Lasting Legacy

Peace, freedom and justice for all people of conscience

Have you thought about leaving conscience a gift in your will?

Gifts in wills, called legacies, are a wonderful way to support the right of conscience now and into the future. Leaving a gift in your will is something everyone can do in a way which suits your particular circumstances.

After providing for your family and friends, why not consider whether you would like to leave a gift, of any size, to **conscience**?



Support the future of conscientious objection

At **conscience**, we want to see the day when we can choose for our taxes to be spent on peacebuilding, rather than killing. We really hope to see that day. And we want to be sure that there is a campaigning organisation continuing the struggle for the right not to pay for war.

You can be part of making that possible.

Leaving a gift in your will can make a lasting difference, since it costs nothing now and can increase in real value over time.

conscience exists because of supporters like you.

Did you know that most of our income comes straight from our generous supporters? Although economic circumstances have been difficult over the last few years, the reason we're still here and still campaigning for the right not to pay for war is because of every person who decides to support our work. Even one legacy gift makes a tremendous difference in what we can do.

How to leave a gift in your will

If you have a will already, you can replace your will with a new one, or add a codicil to modify the existing one. If you want to write a will for the first time, it may be helpful to consult a legal professional, although this isn't a legal requirement.

There are lots of sources of information available about how to write and amend your will. We recommend The Co-operative Legal Services www.co-operative.coop/legalservices and the UK Government website www.gov.uk/make-will as helpful starting points. You may also find The Natural Death Centre www.naturaldeath.org.uk a useful resource about dying and funerals.

“The conscientious objector is a revolutionary. On deciding to disobey the law he sacrifices his personal interests to the most important cause of working for the betterment of society.”

Albert Einstein

Please contact Shaughan Dolan, Fundraising and Membership Officer, with any questions about legacies, to let us know if you plan to make a bequest, or to request further information.

Get in Contact Today

Please call 020 3515 9132 or email development@conscienceonline.org.uk, or write to us at:

Thank you for taking the time to consider leaving **conscience a gift in your will.**

conscience TAXES FOR PEACE NOT WAR
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The Truth in Testimony

conscience wants to collect ‘statements of conscience’
from our supporters

In our last newsletter we told you that we had launched our public consultation on our Taxes for Peace Bill. The consultation has finished now, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to making the Bill as strong as possible. As we move into the next stage, however, your input is as important as ever.

The timing of our Bill is symbolic, as it marks one hundred years since the first inclusive legal right of conscientious objection, which was enshrined within the 1916 Military Services Act.

In commemoration of this centenary, we will **challenge** the legal recognition of conscience. One hundred years on, we are still not permitted ‘absolute exemption’ from military service, as we remain financially conscripted through our taxes regardless of our conscience.

In 21st-century Britain, military emphasis has shifted from large armies to advanced and destructive technology. To maintain such sophisticated weaponry the armed services require the conscription of all citizens, through our taxes.

John Stoner, of Every Church a Peace Church, encapsulates the need to extend the right of conscientious objection by stating, ‘As participants, or perpetrators of war, every citizen of the modern technological state is conscripted for warfare, to accept the ideology of deterrence and to fund the technology of violence.’

We must continue to challenge a state that takes our financial contribution towards the military machine for granted, because as warfare modernises; the legal clauses that constrict it must do so as well.

THE MILITARY SERVICE ACT

~~1916~~ 2016

“In the depths of our conscience, we detect a law which we do not impose upon ourselves, but which holds us to obedience. Always summoning us to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience can when necessary speak to our hearts more specifically: do this, shun that.”

The Vatican Council in its 1965 Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World

In support of our Bill we are creating a register of conscientious objectors to military taxation. We want to list not only names, but **written statements of conscience**.

A statement of conscience is a personal testimony of the truth which informs your objection to war. Within this newsletter you will find a reproduction of the 1916 ‘exemption from military service’ form. If you are forced by your conscience to confront your complicity in war or to work for peace, **we want to hear from you**.

Please fill in the enclosed form, detailing your conscientious objection in full, and send it to the [conscience office](#).

By writing down your testimony we can ensure that your voice is heard at Westminster. This gives us a powerful tool to remind our leaders that, even after #100YearsofConscience, the freedom from war taxation has yet to be won.

If you engage in social media, please share your testimony using #100YearsofConscience

Volunteer for **conscience**

conscience could not function without the help of its volunteers whose help is vital to the success of the campaign.

There are a range of volunteering possibilities at **conscience** including:

Help in our North London Office

As part of our volunteering programme you could be involved in campaigning, fundraising, political lobbying, membership and general support.

Executive Committee membership

Our Executive Committee meets four times a year to make decisions on matters such as policy, strategy and finance.

Ad hoc help

There are certain times during the year when the office needs additional help with mailings and other activities. Add your name to our volunteer list and help the campaign for half a day a few times a year!

If you are interested in any of our volunteering opportunities please contact us at campaign@conscienceonline.org.uk or call 020 3515 9132

conscience TAXES FOR PEACE NOT WAR works for a world where taxes are used to nurture peace, not pay for war.

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