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CPTI News - *keeping you in touch with Conscience and Peace Tax International, working for the right to pay for peace not for war*

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Yes, CPTI News is back! For various technical and logistic reasons, CPTI News did not appear at all last year. But 2007 was a very eventful year for CPTI and the wider campaign to assert the right neither to participate in nor pay for war. So this "bumper edition" is an overview of events and developments over the past year-and-a-bit, starting with:

NOVEMBER 2006:

REPUBLIC OF KOREA (South Korea) - A landmark decision by the Human Rights Committee,

At its session which ended on November 3rd, 2006 (the decision was actually published on 23rd January 2007) the Human Rights Committee which monitors the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights found that the Republic of Korea had violated the right to freedom of religion and belief of two conscientious objectors by trying and imprisoning them for refusing military service. It also ruled that the Republic of Korea was under an obligation to avoid similar violations in the future. In so doing it remedied a glaring gap in international case law concerning the right of conscientious objection to military service. Strangely enough, neither the Committee nor any of the regional human rights courts had previously been forced to rule in an individual case on whether it is legitimate for a state to punish a conscientious objector for refusing military service when there had been no means in law for him to apply to be excused on the grounds of conscientious objection. The European Court of Human Rights had had the opportunity to do so in the Ülke case (see CPTI News 2, and the sequel under "July" below), but found against Turkey on other grounds, choosing not to address the question of conscientious objection. This had left a continuing loophole for those who wished to argue that states have the choice whether or not to acknowledge the right of conscientious objection to military service - a loophole that has now been definitively sealed. For a more detailed analysis of the significance of this case, read the briefing paper by Rachel Brett of the Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva, "Conscientious Objection to Military Service: An historic decision." downloadable as:

<http://www.quano.org/geneva/pdf/humanrights/BP2007COKoreaDecision.pdf> .

Are such rulings of any value in practice? Well, on 18th September the South Korean Ministry of Defence announced that it planned before the end of this year, 2008, to put forward a revised Law on Military Service so that conscientious objectors will no longer be obliged to perform military service - a dramatic reversal of the previous official line that any provisions whatsoever for conscientious objectors would seriously weaken the country's military readiness in the face of the threat from the North.. Read more in War Resisters International's CO Update for October 2007 <http://wri-irg.org/pubs/upd-0710.htm> .

DECEMBER 2006

International Work - new grant for CPTI Since 2004, CPTI has been providing briefings to the Human Rights Committee (see previous item).on the general situation of conscientious objection in each country as it reports

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under the Covenant. In December, word came through that the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust had agreed to finance not only the production of these briefings during 2007 and 2008, but also their translation into French and Spanish, so that they are available in all three working languages of the Committee. The briefings are public documents, and can be accessed from the Committee's pages on the website of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/> - from the home page follow "Treaty Bodies", then "CCPR", then "Sessions" .

JANUARY 2007

UK - Peace Tax Seven case goes to European Court of Human Rights

The Peace Tax Seven - seven UK citizens who claim the right for conscientious objectors to have the military part of their taxes diverted to a peace fund (see CPTI News 1, 2 and 3) - lodged an application with the European Court of Human Rights in January 2007 - the full text can be read on their website: www.peacetaxseven.com. A decision has not yet been made as to whether the Court will hear the case. Meanwhile, CPTI is preparing an "amicus brief" in support of the Seven.

The Peace Tax Seven, together with Conscience, the British Peace Tax Campaign, will be hosting the -

12th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF WAR TAX RESISTERS AND PEACE TAX CAMPAIGNS, which will take place from **5th to 7th September 2008** at the Fallowfield Site of Manchester University. Cost per participant will be £150 sterling. Fuller details will be on the dedicated website which is about to be launched at www.peacetax2008.org.uk .

TURKEY - An historic conference on conscientious objection In 2006, when Azerbaijan introduced a "Law on Alternative Service", Turkey became the last of the forty-six member states of the Council of Europe to have absolutely no recognition in law of the right of conscientious objection to military service. It was against this background that the first conference on the subject of conscientious objection ever to be held in Turkey took place on 25th and 26th of January, at Bilgi University, Istanbul. CPTI was represented there.

The conference happened just days after the unprecedented scenes when something like 10,000 people had taken to the streets of Istanbul for the funeral of the murdered journalist Hrant Dink. Dink had notoriously been convicted in 2005 under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code - "insulting Turkish identity" for writing about the mass killing of Armenians during the First World War. Article 318 of the same Penal Code criminalises "Turning the people against military service"; which means that journalists who report anything to do with conscientious objection run the risk of prosecution. So the fact that the authorities allowed this meeting to go ahead unhindered created a feeling of euphoria that things were at last shifting in Turkey, and the manner in which it brought together international experts and prominent Turkish academics generated enormous interest. The 350-seat conference hall soon filled and a video link had to be set up in an overflow room. The papers delivered at the conference will be published in Turkish this February by the Iletisim Publishing House; it is hoped that an English version will eventually be available.

In Turkey, conscientious objection is not just a technical issue which crops up in the course of military recruitment. Many conscientious objectors are Jehovah's Witnesses who ask only that the State does not force them into military service in contradiction to their most deeply held beliefs. But for others conscientious objection is just part of opposition to the militarism which pervades the entire society (read the article by Feyda Sayan in the November 2007 edition of the European Bureau on Conscientious Objection's newsletter [The Right to Refuse to Kill](#):

<http://www.ebco-beoc.org/page/newsletter/newsletter.htm>) .

Many women like Feyda declare themselves as conscientious objectors and are active in the movement. As in Israel, there are strong links between the conscientious objection and feminist movements. Objection to the

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taxes which fund the military may not have gone very far as yet in Turkey, but we found in our conversations that there was no hesitation there in seeing it as a central part of the same campaign. Turkey will be fruitful territory for our movement in future.

FEBRUARY

USA - Visit by Robin Brookes; New York conferences launched.

Robin Brookes, a member of the Peace Tax Seven in England and of the CPTI Board, represented the two organisations at the memorial service for Marian Franz, former President of CPTI, on 17th February. He spent a day in Washington at the headquarters of the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, then on 20th February he took part in an afternoon/evening discussion on military taxes and conscience at Pendle Hill, Philadelphia. On Friday 22nd February he attended the court hearing of Dan Jenkins' appeal in his tax withholding case (see CPTI News 3), and that weekend he shared the experience of the Peace Tax Seven with a conference at Purchase Quaker Meeting House, New York State, which had been convened to look at the possibility of linking individual taxpayers in a joint legal action in the USA, paralleling what the Peace Tax Seven have done in Britain.

The Appeal Court published its rejection of the Jenkins case on 6th March; Dan has now taken it on through another level - see under "October" below. Meanwhile the Purchase weekend has been followed by further conferences sponsored by the New York Yearly Meeting of Quakers in different parts of the state; Rochester, near Lake Ontario, from 15th to 17th June and Flushing, New York City, from 23rd to 25th September. At both of these CPTI has performed its function of linking actions in different countries and continents. Alan Gamble represented the CPTI Board at both. Derek Brett travelled from Geneva for the Rochester conference entitled "Building the Conscience Movement" and spoke at a panel on "The failure of violence and movement from conscience to action", together with Fred Dettmer, a Quaker attorney who has been working with Dan Jenkins on his case, and Robert Holmes of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Rochester. For the Flushing meeting, which had the theme "Is Freedom of Religious Conscience a Fundamental Human Right?", both Robin and Derek returned to the USA. (Of course they answered the question with a resounding "YES!"). Symbolically, the conference overlapped with public events to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the "Flushing Remonstrance" when the citizens had successfully complained about the persecution of Quakers by Peter Stuyvesant, Governor of New York (at that time still a Dutch colony). Any of these dangerous pacifists who set foot in New York he had previously either imprisoned or expelled...

ISRAEL - Unprecedented fifth consecutive sentence for woman conscientious objector

In Israel, women as well as men are liable to compulsory military service. There is a "Conscience Committee" to which those who declare themselves conscientious objectors are referred, but this committee functions entirely within the Israeli Defence Force, and is notoriously hostile to objectors, very few of whom it accepts. In November 2006, nineteen-year-old female conscientious objector Hadas Amit had her application turned down by the committee and was ordered to report for military service. She refused, writing to the military authorities that to do so "would absolutely and in all respects contradict my convictions and my way of life". So on 18th December was sentenced to fourteen days imprisonment. On her release she persisted in her refusal and, contrary to all international standards, was sentenced again for the same offence. In all this happened five times, the final sentence of 21 days being handed down on 18th February. By the time she was released in March she had served 73 days in military prison, longer than any previous woman objector. At that point the military gave up trying to break her. She was still not granted recognition as a conscientious objector, but on 28th May she was formally pronounced "unfit for service". For the full story, look on the New Profile website at:

<http://www.newprofile.org/showdata.asp?pid=1187> .

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MARCH

UNITED NATIONS - Alan Gamble speaks at Human Rights Council

Alan Gamble, Executive Director of the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, Washington DC, who is also a member of the CPTI Board, visited Europe together with his wife Prisca in March and April. They joined the CPTI team at the fourth session of the new United Nations Human Rights Council. At a meeting on 27th March, arranged jointly by CPTI and the Quaker United Nations Office, on the theme "Conscientious objection to military service - latest developments", Alan spoke about "Military service through taxation, and objection to it". His talk was very well received by an audience by an audience of non-governmental organisations, UN personnel and diplomats, many of whom had obviously never before thought about the issue. Other speakers gave updates on the Human Rights Committee's Korea decision (reported above) and on latest developments in Russia. A recording was made, and it is hoped that edited transcripts can eventually be posted on the CPTI website (www.cpti.ws) .

APRIL

USA - Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill reintroduced On April 18th, Representative John Lewis of Georgia reintroduced the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill (reference HR1921). The previous Bill (HR2631), introduced by Representative Lewis in 2005, had lapsed with the end of the 109th Congress. The new draft, which was referred by Congress to the Committee on Ways and Means, incorporated only minor amendments. Both texts may be read in full on the CPTI website at http://cpti.ws/bills/bill_list.html .

MAY

COLOMBIA - Conscientious Objectors' Day and after.

Derek Brett, CPTI's representative in Geneva, his wife Rachel Brett, of the Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva, and Andreas Speck of the War Resisters International office in London were among the international guests invited by Colombia's National Assembly of Conscientious Objectors to the events in Medellin commemorating International Conscientious Objectors' Day (May 15th). Subsequently, the three accompanied representatives of the objectors' movement and their lawyers at very fruitful meetings in Medellin and Bogota with the legal authorities (*Personaria*), the ombudsman's office (*Defensoria del Pubelo*), the Colombia offices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and with the Vice-Presidency and the Ministry of Defence. The aim of the meetings was threefold: first, to update the authorities on the continuing development of the international legal standards regarding conscientious objection and to point out that these standards apply whether or not there is any recognition in domestic law of conscientious objection; second, to seek their assistance in countering all illegal recruitment; and third, to introduce the new "*Tarjeta Objedor/a de Conciencia*" which WRI is issuing to declared conscientious objectors. Much military recruitment in Colombia takes the form of "*batidas*" where any young men who cannot show their *libreto militar* - a card proving that they have performed military service, or been exempted - are loaded into the back of an army truck and taken to the barracks. The *Tarjeta Objedor/a de Conciencia* is a card of the same format and is linked to a database held by WRI. If, despite showing it, any conscientious objector is forcibly recruited - whether by the military, the guerrilla, or any other armed group - one message from the objector's local support group will launch an immediate complaint, with full details, to international mechanisms, and an action alert, complete with photograph, in more than forty countries. For a fuller report on conscientious objection in Colombia see the special edition of *The Broken Rifle* produced for Conscientious Objectors' Day (and available in English, Spanish, German and French at <http://www.wri-irg.org/br-home.htm>).

As in Turkey, conscientious objection in Colombia is seen as a general anti-militarist movement, by definition including tax objection. The Bogota-based *Acción Colectiva de Objetores y Objektoras de Conciencia* (ACOOC) took advantage of Derek Brett's visit, inviting him to moderate a lively "conversation on fiscal objection" on 20th May, which brought together people who had been involved in four separate initiatives on the subject. One

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insight which emerged was that one form of fiscal objection is effectively forced on conscientious objectors in Colombia. Without the *libreto militar*, employment in the formal economy is practically impossible, so many are in fact obliged to make their living out of the sight of the taxman!

In November, it was the turn of two members of ACOOC, Lukas Pardoe and Milena Romero, to travel to Europe for a speaking tour of half a dozen countries to raise support for the international accompaniment campaign; they also had a number of private meetings around the UN in Geneva to discuss the situation of conscientious objectors in Colombia.

JUNE:

CANADA - Bill Introduced

On 13th June, the "Conscientious Objection Act, Bill C-460" was introduced as a private member's bill in the Canadian Parliament by Bill Siksay of British Columbia.. Unlike previous drafts, this Bill would entitle conscientious objectors to stipulate that *all* of their income tax, not just the notional proportion which would have gone to military expenditure, should be put into a fund which was not available for the defence budget. Conscience Canada are currently lobbying hard in support of the Bill. For more details see their September newsletter, at

http://www.consciencecanada.ca/newsletters/Newsletter_2007_09.pdf

The full text of the Bill is on the CPTI website at http://cpti.ws/bills/bill_list.html .

Bill Siksay is among the speakers on the 11 minute DVD, "Work for Peace - Stop Paying for War" issued by Conscience Canada in 2007. The DVD can be watched on YouTube in English or obtained in either English or French (*TRAVAILLONS pour la PAIX. CESSONS DE PAYER pour la GUERRE*) using the order form on the Conscience Canada website

<http://www.consciencecanada.ca/References/dvd.html>.

JULY:

TURKEY: the Ülke saga continues

It is ironic that it was the major modernisation and westernisation which took place in the 1920's under Ataturk that created the militarist establishment which every so often flexes its muscles to impede the country's closer integration with the rest of Europe. After the uplift of the January conference it was a sobering shock to everyone when in June a military prosecutor issued a fresh arrest warrant against Osman Murat Ülke, claiming that he had not completed sentences of imprisonment handed down in 1999 - the very sentences which had in 2006 been condemned by the European Court of Human Rights as comprising inhuman or degrading treatment! (CPTI News 2). Turkey's latest action, in blatant disregard of the decision of the European Court of Human Rights, was itself roundly condemned by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe when they met in the Autumn, and this has helped to ensure that the arrest was never carried out. At the time of writing Ülke remains out of prison - to say "at liberty" would be inaccurate, given the life he is forced to live in Turkey with no official status.

But even as this crisis was at its height, good news came from another direction. Conscientious objector Halil Savda, who had been held in a military prison since the beginning of December on charges of "persistent disobedience", because he refused to be recruited, was released on 28th July, and this time was not immediately re-arrested (although he too is not really free, still having charges hanging over him).

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SEPTEMBER:

ISRAEL - Yoni Ben Artzi victorious in Supreme Court

For eight years, Jonathan (Yoni) Ben Artzi has been perhaps the most high profile conscientious objector in Israel. Unlike many, his objection is not just to the occupation of the Palestinian territories; he is a complete pacifist. Perhaps in the long run this poses a greater threat of undermining the ideology of the Israeli Defence Force. Perhaps their singular intransigence in his case is because he is the nephew of former (hawkish) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. In all he has served some eighteen months in military prison. On 10th September, his case was heard by the Supreme Court, which took the unusual step of summoning the chief military prosecutor to appear in person. In an email to his supporters, Yoni reports what happened next:

After Supreme Court judges Beinisch, Levi and Meltzer expressed their discomfort with having to send me to prison now, 8 years after the whole saga began, the military was forced into an agreement with us, in which they admit defeat: the agreement states that I will not have to serve any time in prison, only having two months of probation, and that I remain loyal to my pacifist views. This is a major blow to a prosecution that started this whole thing with a goal of sending me [with five other refusers] to at least one year in prison.

This result falls short of a binding judgement from the Court which would have entrenched the recognition of conscientious objection in Israeli law. But at least the persecution of one pacifist is over and the military will have to think twice about continuing to hound objectors in the future...

SPAIN - A tax objection case rejected by the constitutional court.

Joan Surroca, from Barcelona, had withheld exactly 4.8% of his tax bill for 1998, which was the proportion in that year's budget allocated to the Ministry of Defence, and had paid a corresponding amount to organisations working in the sphere of peace and development. The tax authority did not accept this diversion and demanded the tax concerned (109,792 pesetas as it was then - about 660 euros in today's money), plus interest, plus a fine. Surroca appealed to the tax authority, then to the *Tribunal Económico Administrativo* of Catalonia (TEARC), then to the *Tribunal Superior de Justicia de Cataluña*, which passed down its verdict in March 2006. The verdict was mixed; the tribunal agreed that this form of tax diversion is not permissible. But as Surroca had actually paid the amount in question it cancelled the fine, ruling that this was not tax evasion but a "gap of interpretation or a reasonable and divergent interpretation" which should not be punished. (Thanks to Pedro Otaduy, CPTI's President, for summarising the history of the case; the decision of the *Tribunal Superior*, in the original Spanish, can be read on the CPTI website at http://cpti.ws/court_docs/court_list.html . Also on our website (at http://cpti.ws/bills/bill_list.html) we will shortly have available the text of a tax objection Bill (*Proposición de ley de Objeción Fiscal*) which on 28th June 2006 was introduced in the Spanish Parliament by the party to which Joan Surroca belongs, *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*, supported by *Izquierda Unida-Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds* (a left-green coalition); sadly the Bill was voted down by 293 votes to 14.

Joan Surroca took his case on to the highest court in the land; the Spanish constitutional court. On 2nd September it turned him down. He is now contemplating whether to follow the Peace Tax Seven to the European Court of Human Rights, and has been in touch with CPTI and the Peace Tax Seven to discuss this possibility.

ARMENIA - A new wave of imprisonment of Jehovah's Witness conscientious objectors

On 26th September, in Warsaw, the Jehovah's Witnesses reported to the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) that 82 of their members were now in prison as conscientious objectors in Armenia, the highest number ever. Armenia supposedly made provision for conscientious objection in a "Law on Alternative Service" in 2004. In the first year, 22 Jehovah's Witnesses, one Molokan and one non-religious objector registered as conscientious objectors and took up alternative service in psychiatric hospitals, sanatoriums and nursing homes. Gradually, however, it became

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clear that all these establishments were in fact under military control. The conscientious objectors themselves were required to swear an oath and to wear military uniforms. They were fed on military rations; some were even forced to have military haircuts. Monthly reports were made to the Chief of the General Staff; any disciplinary matters were dealt with by the military prosecutor's office. There were also complaints about the conditions of the alternative service, particularly that they were confined at all times to the establishment to which they had been allocated (which of course prevented them from joining in worship). Within months all the religious objectors had left (it is believed that the non-religious objector gave in and agreed to perform military service).

Until the "alternative service" in Armenia becomes truly civilian, and not just an unarmed military service Jehovah's Witnesses and others will have a conscientious objection to performing this, hence the new wave of imprisonments. In a report published on 16th January this year:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report/religious-minority-faces-discrimination-armenia-20080116>,

Amnesty International concludes that all Jehovah's Witnesses currently imprisoned for conscientious objection in Armenia are prisoners of conscience. A number of cases from Armenian conscientious objectors are now pending before the European Court of Human Rights.

(The full September statement by the Jehovah's Witnesses may be found at:

http://www.osce.org/documents/odhr/2007/09/26583_en.pdf .

Some of the other background information above comes from the 2006 CPTI Report on Military Recruitment and Conscientious Objection (http://cpti.ws/cpti_docs/publ/publ_list.html) supplemented by more recent reports from Forum 18 News Service (<http://www.forum18.org/>) and Human Rights Without Frontiers (<http://www.hrwf.net>).

OCTOBER:

USA - Jenkins case rejected by Supreme Court.

Having been turned down by the appeal court (see under "February"), the way was clear for Dan Jenkins to take his case all the way to the US Supreme Court. In June he lodged a petition for a writ of certiorari, essentially an application to have his case heard by the Court. It might have been thought that the court's interest would have been aroused by the novel argument which Dan was putting forward, quoting the 9th Amendment to the US constitution, concerning the historic rights of the individual states, but no - on 24th October his petition was dismissed without a hearing. This leaves no further opportunity for Dan to air his arguments in the domestic courts. He is now working on a possible petition to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. All the documentation and full text of the decisions as the Jenkins case has progressed through the courts, together with the accompanying "*Amicus Brief* of New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)" for the Appeal Court and the Supreme Court, are to be found on the CPTI website at http://cpti.ws/court_docs/court_list.html .

Dan himself, along with Naomi Paz Greenberg, who organised the Flushing conference in September, have now joined John Randall and Rosa Packard as CPTI representatives at the UN in New York.

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NOVEMBER:

AUSTRIA: Franz Jägerstätter beatified

On 1st November, during the Pope's visit to Austria, a ceremony was held in the city of Linz to pronounce the beatification of conscientious objector Franz Jägerstätter, who had been executed in Berlin in 1943 after refusing to serve in the German Wehrmacht. (Under Hitler, Austria had been completely incorporated into Germany.) This definitively reversed the collaboration of the Church at the time, which far from supporting Jägerstätter had explicitly condemned his conscientious objection.

Last winter saw the loss of two other notable figures in the history of conscientious objection in Europe. Jean Van Lierde, the first post-war conscientious objector in **BELGIUM**, founder and Honorary President of EBCO (the European Bureau on Conscientious Objection), who also played a leading role in War Resisters International and the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, died on 15th December 2006 at the age of 80. And on 22nd January 2007 **FRANCE** mourned the man they called L'Abbé Pierre, resistance hero and founder of the Emmaus movement. As a member of the first post-war French parliament, he, together with André Philippe, had brought forward the first Bill to propose recognition of conscientious objection to military service in France. (This goal was at last achieved almost 20 years later, in 1963.)

DECEMBER:

CANADA - Asylum for conscientious objectors to the Iraq War?

Very good news for conscientious objectors from the USA who crossed the border to Canada rather than participate in the invasion of Iraq was the motion passed by the Canadian House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration on 6th December. If agreed when it goes to the Parliament as a whole, this will protect from deportation conscientious objectors to any war that does not have the sanction of the UN - a definition which neatly includes the Iraq invasion. The omens are good; the voting on the Committee (which reflects the strength of the parties in the Commons) was seven to four in favour. This is however just the first step in the struggle to obtain permanent political asylum. For more information visit www.resisters.ca.

JANUARY:

UK - Major new study of military recruitment published

January 7th this year saw the publication of a major study of military recruitment in the United Kingdom, written by David Gee and funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. CPTI was among those consulted in the course of the research. "Informed Choice? Armed Forces and Recruitment Practice in the UK" paints a grim picture of the disillusionment which awaits recruits, many as young as 16, when they encounter the realities of military life as opposed to the image which is sold to them. In the section on conscientious objection, David Gee describes the variable treatment of British servicemen who developed a conscientious objection to the Iraq war. Among his recommendations are a call for much better information about conscientious objection to be supplied to new recruits, and for more consistency in the handling of conscientious objection. The 160-page report can be obtained from www.informedchoice.org.

ON INTO 2008: - Conscripts - an endangered species?

At midnight on 31st December conscription ended in Croatia. It joined Bulgaria, Lebanon, Macedonia, Morocco, Romania, Slovakia, and we think Latvia, which had already said farewell to their last conscripts since CPTI News 4 came out. We also hear from a contact in the region that in 2006 the abolition of obligatory military

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service had been one of the first independent actions of the latest member of the United Nations - Montenegro. In very few of the countries which maintain conscription has there not been some debate about the "professionalisation" of the armed forces; Ukraine is the latest to set a firm date for the end of conscription - the end of 2009. Such a move is also a plank in the platform of the strongly-placed Taiwanese presidential candidate, Ma Ying-jeou. Yes, there are still a few bleak spots where all conscientious objectors are imprisoned or forced into the military. To those mentioned in some of the reports above might be added Eritrea, Turkmenistan, and Singapore. And there are other countries - such as Greece, Russia and of course Armenia (see under "September" above) - where the laws and their implementation are far from satisfactory; and many governments are still reluctant to give full recognition to the rights of those who become conscientious objectors when they are already serving in the military. But the overall world picture regarding compulsory military service and conscientious objection to it (COMS) is developing very rapidly and favourably.

But conscription through taxes goes on unchecked - so must our campaign!

The end of conscript armies does not however mean that the world is turning its back on militarism. Quite the contrary. "Professionalisation" means that each country's military establishment is learning that to force unwilling youths to parade with guns is not the most effective way of doing its job of preparing to go to war. For this they are better served by highly-trained and expensively-equipped personnel, backed by sophisticated weaponry. Increasingly, it is money rather than labour the military takes from the people. Increasingly, it is when they are told to pay for war, not when they are told to train for war, that ordinary people realise they are being forced into abetting behaviour which in their their private lives would be completely immoral. And as fewer people are made to perform military service, so conscientious objection to the taxation which funds military expenditure (COMT) is increasingly coming to the fore. Traditional conscientious objection organisations have done an excellent job for conscripts, and this work is not yet finished. But by and large they are not geared to carry forward a campaign of conscientious objection to "war taxes". That is where CPTI comes in.

We have reported that as we enter 2008 citizens in Britain, Spain and the USA have taken their governments to the highest court in the land, seeking recognition of their conscientious objection to contributing through taxation to military expenditure, and are now looking at internationalising their arguments. Bills are currently before Congress in the USA and the Canadian Parliament. Elsewhere, as in Spain, the lessons of the last attempt to introduce legislation are currently being fed into future strategy. Around the world, there are taxpayers who are paying under protest, lobbying politicians, and challenging their governments in the courts over their conscientious objection to funding the military. It is a bottom-up movement. There are many people, like Joan Surroca, we do not hear of until they make the headlines.

The year ahead is going to be another important one. Support CPTI in its work to bring together the different campaigns and to represent them at the international level (see below if you want to donate). Keep us in touch with your news. Come to the **International Conference in Manchester, England, 5th to 7th September** (Website opening shortly www.peacetax2008.org.uk) Above all, hold fast to your principles and don't give up heart!

ABOUT CPTI NEWS

CPTI News is the occasional e - newsletter of Conscience and Peace Tax International, the United Nations accredited non - governmental organisation (ngo) which works for recognition of the right to have a conscientious objection to taxation for military purposes. This edition of CPTI News was compiled by Derek Brett, CPTI's permanent representative at the UN in Geneva, who takes personal responsibility on behalf of CPTI for any inaccuracies or other shortcomings.

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to others. Back editions of CPTI News can be found on the CPTI website - www.cpti.ws.

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How to give: *In the USA and Canada* Make out your check to "PTF for CPTI" and send it to: CPTI, in care of NCPTF, 2121 Decatur Place NW, Washington, D.C. 20008-1923, USA. (The Peace Tax Foundation (PTF) is a registered non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization)

In the rest of the world (no cheques, please!): Send payment either by bank transfer to Bank van De Post, (agency: Diestesteenweg, Kessel-Lo) to the credit of Conscience and Peace Tax International, Bruineveld 11, 3010 Leuven (Belgium): IBAN (International Bank Account Number): BE12 0001 7098 1492. BIC (Bank Identification Code): BPOTBEB1,

or by International Postal Money Order (IPMO): At your local post office in any country you can send an IPMO in euros to CPTI. Outside the euro zone this method is usually cheapest.

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