



CPTI News

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*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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The six months since the first edition of CPTI News have brought many interesting developments - not all of them in the usual places:

Take **BOLIVIA**. The mysterious request for information we at CPTI received back in 2003 from the office of the *Defensor del Pueblo* or Ombudsman in Bolivia was explained when we heard that the case he had brought on behalf of Alfredo Dias Bustos has been admitted by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (Case No 14/04). Among other things, Bustos, a Jehovah's Witness, is arguing under Article 12 (freedom of conscience and religion) of the American Convention on Human Rights that as a conscientious objector he should not be required to pay the military tax which Bolivia, along with many other states, levies on men who do not perform their military service. This is the first time that such direct substitution of financial conscription for bodily conscription has been challenged in an international court; it is rumoured that a "friendly settlement" has been reached, including exemption from military tax, but we are waiting to see this in writing.

and **BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA**. After the 2004 Sarajevo conference *CPTI News One* was looking forward to a breakthrough in fiscal objection, linked to alternative service, in the Balkans. In fact a more fundamental breakthrough has taken place. At the beginning of October an ecstatic e-mail came round from Darko Brkan of *Prigovir BiH* (Objection Bosnia-Herzegovina):

"there is great news from BiH - there is no more compulsory military service after 1st of January 2006 - the conscription and service are already stopped, but the law will formally come into power on the 1st of January. It was decided on the parliament session on thursday :))) GREAT NEWS!!! Everything we spoke about and the politicians didn't want to accept on the conference came to life just one year after :))))

So, all 3000 objectors from BiH are now free from any service and all people from BiH in the future are free of service...

Well, the things are improving indeed :))) We will now have a chance to work more on other programs we want to start - such as development of peace

activism and activism in general, work on other antimilitaristic issues, work in other countries of the region (at the moment, we're developing a CO campaign in Albania... "

More familiar territory is **GERMANY** from where the December edition of *Friedenssteuer Nachrichten* (Peace Tax News) reveals an impressive amount of activity. Apologies in advance for any mistranslations in the items summarised below.

A new round of lobbying has been launched this month, with new resources to hand. Klausmartin Vogt has produced an updated version of the Pro- and Contra- arguments which frequently come up in discussions with parliamentarians. And after an analysis of fifteen past legislative proposals from Germany and elsewhere, but particularly a draft bill prepared by Dr. Paul Tiedemann, a constitutional lawyer from Frankfurt, the working group on legislation had in 2003 agreed on the elements of a *Zivilsteuergesetz* - a Civil (= Civilian) Tax Law. This would have two central features: first, all military expenditures would in future be financed, not from the totality of Government revenues, but entirely from taxes on personal income; and second, each taxpayer would have the option whether his or her personal tax contribution should be spent for civilian purposes only or also for military purposes. The campaign commissioned two expert studies, from Professor Dr. Andreas Fisahn, of the University of Bielefeld, on the compatibility of a peace tax law with the German Constitution and European Law, and from Professor Dr. Dirk Lühr, MBA, of the Trier *Fachhochschule* (Institute of Technology), on the cost implications of such a law. These studies have now been completed; between them, in over a hundred pages of close,

detailed analysis, they show that there would be no constitutional implications to such legislation, how it might be administered in practice, and, drawing particularly on experience with the present Church Tax in Germany, that there would be a once-off cost of well below 100,000 Euros in setting up the necessary systems, but that thereafter the marginal administrative costs would be negligible.

Two members of the German campaign report on their recent appearances in the tax courts. Christel Spenn's case went back to her 2001 tax bill; she had made an application to prevent any of it being used for military purposes; this application had been refused by the tax authorities and in November 2002 Christel had lodged an appeal, following it with a letter of March 2003 asking that in view of the Iraq war this appeal be heard as a matter of urgency. This was ignored, but out of the blue in mid August 2005 she had been invited to attend a hearing of the Tax Court for Sachsen-Anhalt, in Dassau, on the 31st. Predictably the appeal was rejected; the court ruled that it was not competent to reconsider the assessment which had been made by the financial authorities, moreover that the constitutional guarantees of the freedom of conscience were not absolute but could be realised only through the medium of specific legislation. On the 7th December, in the Tax Court in Nurnburg, the case of Dr. Klaus-Dieter Preis was heard. Since November 2004 he has, on grounds of conscience been putting all his taxes into a special account in order to protect them against being applied to military expenditure. Together with his application for a delay in the collection of these taxes until such time as the federal authorities have put in place mechanisms to guarantee their use for exclusively civilian expenditure, he had submitted a request that his case be referred to the Federal Constitutional Court. By Klaus-Dieter's own account the Court was visibly shocked to discover that several members of the public were attending the "public" hearing of a case for which it had allocated a mere fifteen minutes. Undaunted, he had referred them to the constitutional guarantees of freedom of conscience, had shown the consistency throughout his career with which he had displayed his anti-militarist credentials, and had proceeded to demonstrate how the outgoing federal Government had systematically sought to undermine all the military constraints which had been placed on the German nation since the end of the Second World War and to abandon the strictly defensive role set out in the Constitution. He cited direct German participation in the wars in Kosovo and Afghanistan and its indirect participation in

Iraq. He could not in all conscience continue to help finance such a militarist-led national policy... Surprisingly, the representative of the tax authorities, obviously expecting the case to be disposed of speedily, had no particular arguments to present against this case. The court will not pronounce its verdict for some months, but meanwhile the case got surprisingly detailed coverage in the regional press - all in all a good afternoon, Klaus-Dieter reckons, rounded up for most of the "public" by a long *Plausch* in the café. (*Plausch* isn't in my dictionary, but perhaps it doesn't need to be!)

Germany was, of course, a vocal critic of the decision to invade Iraq, and still declines to commit troops to the operation. Evidence of the extent of the indirect support it has given (sharing intelligence, allowing use of national air space, logistical support in Kuwait and Germany itself, etc.), has however sparked growing controversy, particularly regarding how that squares with the safeguards in the 1949 Constitution. All this quite apart from the question of connivance, along with other European governments, in the despicable practice of "extraordinary renditions" (on which issue the very clear and unemotionally-worded report by Dick Marty to the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly is well worth reading in full - the complete internet reference is: http://assembly.coe.int/CommitteeDocs/2006/20060124_Jdoc032006_E.pdf).

This is the context of the landmark decision handed down by the Federal Administrative Court in Leipzig on 21st June, overturning the verdict of a military tribunal against Major Florian Pfaff. In April 2004, Major Pfaff had refused to continue work on the development of some military software as there was no way of guaranteeing that it would not be used in the war in Iraq; the military tribunal had found him guilty of disobeying orders and had demoted him to Captain. Major (once more) Pfaff is a serving officer, and had not sought recognition as a conscientious objector. He was apparently rather disappointed that the Court had not ruled on the argument that the Iraq war was contrary to international law, and German participation contrary to the Constitution. Even so, the decision of the court that an individual member of the armed forces is permitted to refuse on grounds of conscience to participate in a specific military action is truly epoch-making.

No such joy for selective objectors to serving in the territories

under Israeli occupation! One piece of news from **ISRAEL**, however, which not everyone may have seen is the case of Idan Halili, a 19-year old Jewish Israeli woman who last November when called up to the army (as women are in Israel), applied for recognition as a conscientious objector on the grounds that she was a feminist. As such, she explained, she could not serve in a "strongly patriarchal institution, like the army" dedicated to "the superiority of male-identified values", and must work against its dominant role in society, throughout which it helped to spread the same values. The first response of the authorities was to refuse to consider her request and imprison her for refusing enlistment. At the end of December the "Conscience Committee" did however consider her case, and although they were not prepared to acknowledge her as a conscientious objector, she was exempted from military service as "unsuitable" - a decision which received considerable media coverage in Israel. For more details check out the New Profile website, www.newprofile.org .

From **ITALY** comes one of those heartening examples of action at the local level which, if only everywhere joined... The local authority of Villaputzu, on Sardinia, has passed a resolution expressly banning within the entirety of the area under its jurisdiction, which (significantly) includes a large military complex, " The transport, storage and use of all types of ammunition and arms containing depleted uranium whether for testing purposes or for military and civilian training exercises."

If in Germany there are claims that the Government is not acting in accordance with the Constitution, in **JAPAN** it is the Constitution itself which is being challenged, and Japanese peace organisations are urgently seeking international support to resist an erosion of the principles enshrined there in the idealism of the post- Second World War years. Specifically, it is Article 9 which is under threat. This reads: " 1) *Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes. 2) In order to accomplish (this), land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognised.*" Of course, it is many years since Japan did create what is termed the "Self

Defence Force", but its status has remained ambiguous, and the constitutional provision remains more effective than the German one in preventing deployment overseas. It is ironic that the pressure - to which the Japanese Government is showing itself inclined to yield - that they should drop this article and thus be able to play a full part in the "war on terror" should be coming from exactly the same direction as the original insistence on forever preventing a resurgence of Japanese militarism. For more details, visit the campaign's website, www.article-9.org .

SPAIN. From a long-established peace organisation in Catalonia, the *Coordinadora Patrimoni Tarragona de la Pau*, we get up-to-date details of the vigorous Spanish fiscal objection campaign. No fewer than 8,000 persons in Spain each year withhold that part of their taxes which go towards military expenditure, and in 90% of cases the state takes no action. Whenever they do take judicial proceedings to recover the unpaid tax this provides a platform for the movement to express its anti-militarist message and show the volume of support. Those who take part in the campaign are told to make an entry under the "other deductions" section of the tax form; they may choose whether this should be a proportion equivalent to the 5.8% of the national budget allocated to the Ministry of Defence or a fixed per capita equivalent suggested as 84 Euros. Students and others who pay no net income tax are encouraged to send a nil return with a demand for reimbursement of an appropriate proportion of the indirect taxes they have paid. The form should be accompanied by proof of payment of the appropriate sum into a fiscal objection fund. Each fund decides annually which projects it will support; in 2005 the Tarragona funds sponsored the *Coordinadora* itself, the Tarragona branch of Peace Brigades International, and the *Plataforma Castell de Figueres*; objectors could indicate with their payment to which they wished their contribution to go, or might suggest another organisation as long as this met the general peace-building and anti-militarist criteria. The campaign provides a suggested format for a letter to be sent to the provincial office of the Treasury announcing the objection and copying details of the deduction made; objectors are also asked to send details to the national co-ordination of the fiscal objection, which gathers cumulative figures for campaigning purposes.

In **TURKEY** the sad case of Mehmet Tarhan, mentioned in *CPTI News One*, drags on. Following a trial on 9th June Mehmet was "released" from military prison and taken back to "his" unit in Tokat where he again refused to accept military orders and was promptly re-arrested and returned to Sivas Military Prison, where he has languished ever since. On 30th September he went on hunger strike after prison guards had forcibly cut his hair and beard. He ended his hunger strike after 34 days when the authorities agreed to take action over the maltreatment he had received in prison; some of his aggressors among fellow-inmates and members of the prison staff who encouraged them have now appeared in court. Meanwhile, the sequence of Mehmet's trials continues - the next is currently expected to take place on 23rd February. Quite apart from the campaign to have his conscientious objection recognised, Mehmet is struggling to avoid the "solution" preferred by the military authorities, a rectal examination to "prove" that he is gay and condemn him to the despised "dysfunctional - unfit for service" categorisation. Keep watching the War Resisters International website - www.wri-irg.org for details of developments and news of follow-up to the day of action on December 9th which saw events in support of Mehmet Tarhan in more than a dozen countries.

A boost to Mehmet Tarhan and the seventy other declared conscientious objectors currently refusing to perform military service in Turkey came on 24th January with the long-awaited verdict of the European Court of Human Rights in the case Osman Murat Ulke v Turkey. Under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights the Court found that Ossi Ulke, the doyen of Turkish COs, had been subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment. He has been imprisoned eight times for refusing to perform military service, and has served a total of 701 days in military prison. As the Court points out, this reveals the complete inadequacy of the Turkish legal system to deal with cases of conscientious objection; as long as he refuses to perform military service there is no limit to the number of times he can be sentenced for what is essentially the same offence. This has also meant that he has been unable to lead a normal life:

"He has no official address and has broken off all contacts with the administrative authorities. He has been sheltered by the family of his fiancée, with whom he has been unable to contract a legal marriage. He has also been unable to recognise the child born from their union as his son..."

"The numerous criminal prosecutions against the applicant, the cumulative effects of the criminal convictions which resulted from them and the constant alternation between prosecutions and terms of imprisonment, together with the possibility that he would be liable to prosecution for the rest of his life, had been disproportionate to the aim of ensuring that he did his military service. They were more calculated to repressing the applicant's intellectual personality, inspiring in him feelings of fear, anguish and vulnerability capable of humiliating and debasing him and breaking his resistance and will. The clandestine life amounting almost to "civil death" which the applicant had been compelled to adopt was incompatible with the punishment regime of a democratic society."

It is interesting to note that in their submission to the Court Turkey had pointed out that in the Law on Military Service, dating back to 1927, there is a provision that as long as the number of available recruits is greater than the needs of the Army, any conscript could, by paying a tax, be permitted - after basic training - to perform a shortened military service or even substitute a service of civilian nature. They did not seem to realise that this does not satisfactorily address a genuine conscientious objection, it is however interesting as yet another example of a state which agrees with CPTI as seeing taxation as an alternative means of conscription!) The judgement has shaken the authorities in Turkey's still highly militarised society. At a press conference in Izmir Ossi himself called upon the State to accept the implications of the decision and legislate for conscientious objection in a way which will not continue to bring it into conflict with international legal standards. The initial responses from politicians were defensive, but Turkey is very sensitive about issues which might cause problems in future EU membership talks - and following this decision conscientious objection certainly will. It is clear that there will be discussions at the top level in the governing hierarchy about the implications of the court's ruling. Ossi also demanded that as well as the monetary compensation he has been awarded his persecution now cease: *"I have proved my own stance by going to court by my own will on many occasions and giving a total of two years (variably at the barracks or military prison) from my life because of this. I see on the reader comments published on internet editions of some newspapers that conscientious objection is equated with cowardice. What kind of coward would surrender oneself to the hands of the strongest institution of Turkey, at the lack of legal regulations to protect him, and risk torture and mistreatment? In*

short, I have done my share of the work and now I demand security for my family and myself and a life I can organize with ease."

That said, this was not the definitive verdict on the international legal status of conscientious objection which we had all been hoping for. The court had specifically been asked to consider the case under Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights - freedom of thought, conscience and religion. But they chose to ignore this instruction, relying instead on the blatant abuses in Turkey's treatment of conscientious objectors. Ossi Ulke is consulting with his lawyers about whether to appeal asking specifically that his complaints under Article 9 be considered. Usually, it is the Courts which protect human rights while the politicians drag their feet. Bizarrely, in the Council of Europe, it is the other way round. While the Council of Ministers has pronounced firmly on the right of conscientious objection to military service and is, as part of the "accession criteria", monitoring the legislation put into place by all new members (which now include even Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Russia), the European Court of Human Rights still seems unprepared to tell a founder member in unequivocal terms that there is such a right!

This cop out is very bad news indeed for the Peace Tax Seven in the **UNITED KINGDOM**. On 15th July their application for judicial review was heard before Mr Justice Collins in the High Court - your CPTI correspondent was among the fifty supporters beneath whose weight the public gallery groaned. Rapidly becoming a thorn in the side of the political establishment - see his interventions in deportation cases - Collins gave them a very sympathetic hearing. The Treasury - the "defendant" in this case - relied heavily on the argument that a number of similar cases in the 1980's had been adjudged "not admissible" before the European Court of Human Rights, ultimately by analogy with an earlier case brought by Pat Arrowsmith, the CND veteran. With the technicalities edited out, the relevant part of the judge's summing-up reads: "*The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is not in issue. There is no interference with that right in the requirement to pay tax, or indeed in the payments that are made out of those taxes. The question that arises is whether it contravenes and interferes with the right and freedom to manifest the belief in practice.* (emphasis added)... The Treasury *accepts that there is an argument which, in the absence of any authority*

from Strasbourg," - that is the European Court of Human Rights - "could be applied to suggest that in circumstances such as this, the objection to payment of the amount of tax for military purposes could be regarded as a manifestation of the belief and therefore would be capable of being protected by Article 9(1) (of the European Convention)... Miss Arrowsmith distributed leaflets to soldiers, urging them to decline service in Northern Ireland. This was dictated by her pacifist views. But the contents of the leaflets did not express pacifist views, nor did the act of distributing the leaflets do so. She was not thereby manifesting her pacifism... Thus, in deciding whether the claimants' conduct constitutes manifesting a belief in practice... one must first identify the nature and scope of the belief. If, as here, the belief takes the form of a perceived obligation to act in a specific way, then, in principle, doing that act pursuant to that belief is itself a manifestation of that belief in practice... This is so whether the perceived obligation is of a religious, ethical or social character. If this were not so, and if acting pursuant to such a perceived obligation did not suffice to constitute manifestation of that belief in practice, it would be difficult to see what in principle suffices to constitute manifestation of such a belief in practice... The Peace Tax Seven submit that the essence of their belief is that no money provided by them should be spent on a military purposes. They should not contribute in any way to military purposes. That would be contrary to their pacifist beliefs. Otherwise, they would be in the position of contributing to something which they believe to be entirely wrong. Accordingly, it is said that they manifest those beliefs when they refuse to pay the amount of tax which is equivalent, or when they say that there should be an arrangement whereby what they pay can be isolated out of the general taxation pool and therefore can ensure that it is not available for military purposes." He summarises their legal authority for claiming "that there is here a manifestation and that the Strasbourg answer is one which needs to be reconsidered. I am bound to say that one sees the force of that submission. Whether, in the end, it would succeed is another matter... But that at this stage is not the point. Indeed, as I have indicated, I think the Treasury recognises that if there were not the Strasbourg jurisprudence... it would be difficult to dispute that there was, in relation to Article 9(1) at least an arguable point to be made." At the end of the day, though, and although the Human Rights Act makes the European Convention enforceable in British courts, the judge did not believe that this could enable British courts to overturn the interpretation of the Convention by the European

Court of Human Rights. Therefore, with obvious disappointment, he ruled that the case would ultimately have to be decided not in London but in Strasbourg. The Seven's lawyers are currently preparing an appeal (for details see www.peacetaxseven.com/skeleton.html) which, if it too fails, will take them closer to the "exhaustion of domestic remedies" before they can go to Strasbourg. But with the European Court of Human Rights in the Ulke case again ducking the opportunity to state categorically that the right of conscientious objection to military service is a legitimate manifestation of the right to thought, conscience and religion (a truth which is now pretty well universally accepted) what chance is there that they are ready to make the much more radical finding that there is a right of objection to taxation for military purposes???

Meanwhile the individual struggles of the Seven with the Revenue continue. On 31st. August, Robin Brookes, one of the Seven, was visited by the bailiff in order to impound goods to cover his unpaid tax. As it happened, Robin had a wall covered with money in a display showing how much the UK spends every ten seconds on the war in Iraq and what the alternative uses of this money might be. After enquiring about the progress of the campaign, the bailiff took the money and left. And more tax objectors are emerging - on 6th December Doug Barker, a farmer in Wiltshire, appeared in Chippenham magistrates court for the first time regarding tax he had withheld in protest against military expenditure.

For the activities of the Seven have reinvigorated and given a higher profile to the entire issue in the UK. The challenge now is to maintain this momentum beyond the court cases - particularly if these continue to be decided negatively. On 9th July - a week before the high court hearing - the group held an open strategy meeting in Birmingham about what themes the campaign might now follow. The idea which gained the most support was that of "the King's shilling". Those of us who spent (arguably) too much of our youth in English pubs are familiar with the distinctive pewter beer tankards with glass bottoms, and the story of why they were developed. In perhaps the 18th or 19th centuries, recruiting officers would go into a pub, and while a young man was not looking would drop a shilling coin into his beer. When he drank up, he would see the coin, but it would be too late - that was his first week's pay as a soldier. He had "taken the King's shilling" and thereby enlisted himself and if he did not now report to barracks would be a deserter. Hence the glass bottom, so that one might see the shilling in advance and suddenly remember another urgent

appointment! But nowadays, of course, the "shilling" is what the King (or State) wants from every pound we earn in order to further its military ambitions...

From the UK, also, comes news of a mass act of civil disobedience planned for early May. One of the repressive pieces of legislation passed in the last few months bans all demonstrations within a kilometer of the Houses of Parliament. The plan is that at least 6,000 people will ring this "exclusion zone" and will then all simultaneously break the law by taking one step forward! For details go to www.pledgebank.com/protest .

From the **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**, there is both bad and good news.

On 1st July a district court in New Jersey sentenced Kevin McKee and Joe and Inge Donato, all members of a small religious community opposing military expenditure, which calls itself "The Restored Israel of Yahweh", to imprisonment of 24 months, 27 months and 6 months, respectively, for not filing personal tax returns but also for their roles in the failure of the McKee-Donato construction company to withhold, on behalf of the revenue, employment tax from those of their employees who were also members of the community. (They had withheld, and passed on, the tax from their other employees). Such sentences in a war tax resistance case are without precedent in at least the last sixty years, and have brought forth a letter signed by twenty-five national religious leaders asking for reconsideration. (It is of course not so common for an employer to take tax resistance "all the way" - this is why, at a time when Spain and the USA can number thousands of resisters, seven linked cases are news in the UK where most employees have no means of stopping the automatic deduction of their taxes before they receive their pay.)

The good news from the USA is that on 20th October the city council in Providence, Rhode Island voted unanimously for a resolution expressing support for the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill currently before the American Congress. They became the first city to pass a resolution of support for the Bill; such resolutions are not legally binding but are important as an indicator of a groundswell of popular support for a measure. The first steps towards the appointment of Nathalie Baker-Merrill to coordinate a concerted campaign in Rhode Island were taken at the Peace Tax Foundation Board meeting which was attended by Derek Brett, our representative to the United Nations in Geneva,

on his visit to the USA in May; so Nathalie has achieved impressively quick results! The big one, also discussed in May, is still waiting. More than 75 supporters of New York City Council Resolution 367, supporting the Peace Tax Fund Bill, gathered on 9th June on the steps of the City Hall for a public hearing which was moderated by Councilman Bill Perkins, proposer of the Resolution. CPTI Chair Marian Franz made a speech explaining the Bill; Rosa Packard, CPTI Representative to the UN in New York, was also among the speakers. The Resolution itself has yet to be brought to a vote.

Back in May in Washington DC, Derek was honoured to be allowed inside the American political system, joining members of the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund and the Center on Conscience on War on their joint congressional lobby day on 16th May - CCW are sponsoring a bill to enshrine in law the right of conscientious objectors to an honourable discharge from the armed forces, rather than this being a possibility allowed for in military regulations and thus subject to the discretion of military authorities, who become far less sympathetic at tough times like the present...(but more on COs in the USA next time!) The lobbying was very successful; when the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund (HR 2631) was introduced a week later by Representative John Lewis of Georgia, he had no fewer than 34 co-sponsors. The events of 16th May ended inside the Capitol itself, where our organisations joined with the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the American Friends Service Committee, Iraq Veterans Against the War and other peace organisations in the public launch of a new joint campaign under the title of "I Will Not Kill". But that was merely the highest-profile part of a truly intensive fortnight's programme of contacts in Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania and DC put together, organised, and indeed enabled, by Rosa's tireless efforts. Further fruit from that visit are still ripening and will be reported in future issues...

... For there is much more going on around the globe than will fit into just one Newsletter. The next issue should be coming out in the Spring, and will bring also updated news from the campaigns in **CANADA** and **the NETHERLANDS**, with apologies for having neglected them this time.

Briefly, some more news of our own doings and our plans for 2006

Derek Brett attended the **Mediterranean Social Forum**, which took place in Barcelona in June 2005, on behalf of CPTI. Despite lacking a common language, he was able to combine effectively with the Tarragona peace group (see Spain, above), to ensure an overwhelming vote in the assembly of anti-militarist organisations for the addition of fiscal objection to the "arsenal" of anti-militarist actions listed in their proposed final statement.

On 20 and 21 October, at the **European Peace and Human Rights Network's** annual conference at the European Parliament building in Brussels, CPTI was represented by Carla Goffi, Abraham Gebreyesus Mehreteab and Dirk Panhuis, Secretary to the CPTI Board. In the workshop on "The Crisis in Civil and Human Rights", Abraham reports, *"I had an opportunity to share my experiences in the campaign against landmines and the importance of campaigning for peace. I shared also the deteriorating of human right violation in my country, Eritrea. My intervention was also mentioned at the reporting about the workshop in the plenary."*

If a full final session of the **United Nations Commission on Human Rights** does indeed go ahead this Spring, (believe it or not this still depends on progress with UN reform plans!) CPTI will participate. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has prepared a report on conscientious objection which will shortly be available (UN reference no. E/CN.4/2006/51); among the input they received was a draft of the research report on military recruitment with special reference to provisions for conscientious objection which CPTI is producing with the aid of a grant from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. That report itself will shortly be published in booklet form and on the CPTI website; *Friends of CPTI* (see below) will receive complimentary copies; for others, details of how to order will appear in *CPTI News Three*.

CPTI is also going to be represented at the **European Social Forum** (www.fse-esf.org), in Athens in May, at the **World Peace Forum** (www.worldpeaceforum.ca) in Vancouver in June, at the **Globalising Nonviolence** (www.globalisingnonviolence.org) conference in Germany in July, and of course at the **Eleventh International Conference of War Tax Resisters and Peace Tax Campaigns** in Berlin in from 26th to 29th October. There is also a suggestion from Hannelore Morgenstern-Przygoda, our Vice-Chair, that CPTI could facilitate a concerted international campaign

to collect **signatures** on a simple statement of our aims, which would then be passed to legislators in the different countries but also added together to show the true extent of our global support. We know that in Germany, Belgium and the USA thousands of signatures have already been collected at one time or another; what would the result be if we could all add together the signatures of support we could collect? How this could be co-ordinated will be on the agenda for the next CPTI Board meeting, but meanwhile we would be glad to receive any suggestions or further examples of successful signature campaigns.

Other plans for the year are still in their early stages. So watch out for *CPTI News Three!*

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**CPTI News** is the occasional (two or three times a year) 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. The newsletter goes out on the wtr-ptc listserve and also to selected addressees with whom CPTI has been in contact over recent months. Back editions can be found on the CPTI website - [www.cpti.ws](http://www.cpti.ws).

### **How Can I Help CPTI?**

First, if you are not already a member, **join your local or national War Tax Resisters or Peace Tax Campaign organisation**. You can find a full up-to-date directory on our website: [www.cpti.ws](http://www.cpti.ws) .

Second, **become a "Friend of CPTI"**. Our lobbying work at the United Nations is not cheap. New York, and even more so Geneva, are expensive cities. Also, as an international ngo we function very economically, making extensive use of e-mail, and most of our conferring is done that way. But not everything can be done electronically. Some travel is essential if we are to keep in touch with other and function effectively at the international level. In the past a lot of travel on CPTI business has not been charged to CPTI. We cannot however go confidently forward to the future depending on our members always being willing - or indeed able - to subsidise us in this way. For a donation as little as five Euros or US dollars (or as large as you wish!) you can be listed as a "Friend of CPTI": just make sure that your name and contact details accompany your donation or are sent in an e-mail entitled "Friends of CPTI" to this newsletter address.

**How to give:**

**In the USA and Canada:**

Make out your check to: Peace Tax Foundation - CPTI Account  
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  
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Send payment to:

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1492.

BIC (Bank Identification Code): BPOTBEB1

International Postal Money Order (IPMO): At your local post office  
in any country you can send an IPMO in euros to CPTI.

**Please DO NOT send checks to our office in Belgium.**

Third, ***this newsletter needs your input.*** Please send or forward  
news of what is happening - good or bad - in **your** part of the world  
to Derek BRETT, CPTI's permanent representative to the United  
Nations Geneva office, on [dubrett@talk21.com](mailto:dubrett@talk21.com) or by post to him at

:

Avenue Adrien-Jeandin 18

CH 1226 Thônex

Switzerland.

As the compiler, Derek Brett takes full responsibility on behalf of  
CPTI for any inaccuracies or other shortcomings. But all our  
readers benefit from us getting it right. So as well as fresh news,  
please do not hesitate to send in any corrections.

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