



Conscience and Peace Tax International

For the right to pay taxes for peace, not for war

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN

International non-profit organization (Belgium 15.075/96)

www.cpti.ws

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Report by the Board of CPTI (period: June 2004 – August 2006) to the 7th General Assembly (October 28, 2006) in Woltersdorf-Berlin (Germany)

1. BOARD MEMBERS (since the by-elections of July 2004):

Marian Franz (chair, USA), **Hannelore Morgenstern-Przygoda** (vice-chair, Germany), **Dirk Panhuis** (secretary, Belgium), **Pedro Otaduy** (treasurer, Spain), **Ricardo Esquivia Ballestas** (Columbia), **Carla Goffi** (Belgium), **Cosimo Tomaselli** (Italy)

2. REPRESENTATIVES:

New York: **Marian Franz, John Randall, and Rosa Packard**

Geneva: **Derek Brett**

3. BOARD MEETINGS:

- 15th meeting: July 8, 2004 (Brussels, Belgium): 6 board members, 3 representatives, and 7 others
- 16th meeting: April 2, 2005 (Geneva, Switzerland): 5 board members, 2 representatives and 1 other
- 17th meeting: April 2, 2006 (Leuven, Belgium): 3 board members, 1 representative

4. WORK IN NEW YORK

Because of medical and other personal difficulties, all three representatives were unable to undertake their usual active role at the UN in New York, but they consulted by email and telephone.

John Randall attended some briefings and met with members of other NGOs. Many of the conversations concerned hopes, expectations and possible actions by NGOs with respect to the formation, structure and operational modes of the Human Rights Council.

On behalf of CPTI he took part in the CONGO NGO Committee on Human Rights.

See also item 6e, below.

5. WORK IN GENEVA

a) Human Rights Committee

Derek Brett paid more and more attention to the work of the Committee. At the session including Serbia and Montenegro (81st Session, 12 - 30 July 2004) he produced informal briefing papers for the Committee on the situation in that country and on the submissions for

the “best practices report” which provided the source material. This input was very much welcomed and was reflected in several of the questions to the delegation of the reporting state.

For the 82nd Session (18 October - 5 November 2004) a briefing paper covering all states due for consideration was prepared and distributed in advance through the Secretariat, and was spoken to at the private briefing of the Committee by NGOs. The Committee showed considerable interest and as a result the issue of conscientious objection was much more to the fore in the consideration of state reports.

With a view to the 83rd Session (New York, 14th March - 5th April 2005) preliminary comments on the State Report of Greece were submitted before the end of the 82nd Session for the attention of the task force drawing up the list of written questions to be put to the delegation. An advance briefing paper for that Session was also prepared on the situation in Uzbekistan.

Derek has continued to prepare briefings for the Human Rights Committee on the situation with regard to conscientious objection to military service in reporting states: Slovenia, Syria, Thailand and Tajikistan in July 2005; Brazil, Canada, Italy and Paraguay in October 2005; Democratic Republic of Congo, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China and Norway in March 2006 (in New York). He also prepared advance reports on the USA and the Republic of Korea, as well as encouraging national CO organisations (NGOs) to brief the Committee.

b) Commission on Human Rights (CHR)

CPTI prepared a written statement asking attention for COMT (see www.cpti.ws under CPTI Documents). In addition to Derek Brett, five CPTI board members attended one week of the 2005 session of Commission on Human Rights. An oral statement was presented with particular attention to the situation in Columbia and the recent massacre of members of the Peace Community of San José de Apartado, which was also mentioned by a number of other NGOs. Later, we learned that Paragraph 22 of the Chairperson's statement on Colombia, agreed by the Commission, reads: *"The Commission condemns massacres and cruel violence, in particular the murder of eight members of the Community of Peace of San José de Apartado, including four children, on 21 February 2005, and calls on the Government of Colombia to ensure that a full investigation be carried out on this massacre, and that its perpetrators be brought to justice."*

Much time was taken by discussions on the reform of the CHR. During the remainder of 2005 and the beginning of 2006 Derek Brett followed the transition from the CHR to the Human Rights Council.

Board members did not attend the first session of the Council in 2006. But CPTI (Derek Brett) presented a written statement for the first session of the new Human Rights Council (A/HRC/1/NGO/24); available on www.cpti.ws.

c) Seminar on CO, April 1, 2005

The seminar on CO, during the session of the CHR on Friday, April 1, 13.00 – 15.00h, was a success. Marian Franz, Adam Maor (Israel), Abraham Gebreyesus (Eritrea), and Christopher Bierwirth (UNHCR) spoke, while Rachel Brett (QUNO) was the moderator of the panel. Besides the panel and CPTI, some 20 persons attended the seminar.

d) NGO Committee on Freedom of Religion or Belief

When dates of meetings have permitted, active participation in the meetings of this committee has continued throughout the year. Derek Brett attended the (Geneva) NGO Committee on Human Rights in order to make the 2004 annual report from the Freedom of Religion Committee, which is technically a sub-committee.

On 7th April 2005, Derek attended a briefing organised by this NGO Committee with Dr. Asma Jahangir, UN Special Rapporteur on the Freedom of Religion or Belief. In a question he suggested that the attitude to conscientious objection was a litmus test of a state's attitude to the freedom to manifest one's religion or belief, and exhorted Dr Jahangir to include it in a routine fashion in her consideration of states. She confirmed publicly that she was mindful of the issue.

e) Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights

Derek Brett submitted a written statement for the session of the Sub-Commission from 26th July to 13th August 2004, and also delivered an oral statement.

6. RESEARCH PROJECT

In May 2006 CPTI published a report entitled "*Military Recruitment and Conscientious Objection: A Thematic Global Survey*", prepared by Derek Brett, CPTI representative in Geneva funded by a grant to CPTI from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust in the UK. The Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva, made a contribution towards publication costs. The Rowntree grant partly funded a visit by Derek Brett to COMS and COMT contacts in New York, Philadelphia and Washington in May 2005. This visit was facilitated and organised by Rosa Packard, who also raised the residue of the costs from a donor in the USA. The study is available for downloading from www.cpti.ws; the printed edition is for sale at 10.00 €//\$ from cpti@cpti.ws.

7. PUBLICITY

a) CPTI News

Two editions have now appeared - at the end of May 2005 and the end of January 2006. Approximately 350 electronic copies go out. So far it has not realised its potential as a direct fund-raising tool, but comments were favourable on the editorial content and feel that it has helped to raise the profile of CPTI.

b) Web site

The web site is constantly being improved and updated by web master John Randall.

c) Leaflet

The CPTI leaflet is now available in English, Dutch, French, Swedish.

8. OTHER ACTIVITIES

a) Sarajevo Conference (Sept. 2004)

Derek Brett attended on behalf of CPTI the regional conference "To Europe through Conscientious Objection and Civilian Service" held in Sarajevo from 20th to 22nd September 2004. The conference was sponsored by the Council of Europe in the context of the requirements in the agreements admitting the countries of the region that they bring in laws recognising conscientious objection and setting up civilian alternative service, and was attended by Government representatives from Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia-

Montenegro, as well as the component parts of Bosnia (the Muslim-Croat Federation and the Republika Srpska) and Serbia-Montenegro, but it was run by the regional network of conscientious objectors' organisations. Beyond simply bringing together in dialogue an unlikely diversity of state and civil society actors, the conference did very important work towards establishing common regional standards for legislation in this field. CPTI input was limited to providing the text of the statement delivered to the Commission on Human Rights in 2001, which text was printed in the advance documents for the conference as an introduction to the principle of tax objection, to distributing our leaflet, and to a few oral interventions in the plenary sessions. In particular, it was possible to take advantage of vigorous debates going on about how alternative service is to be funded in order to point out that the use of specifically-earmarked tax receipts might be one solution. In the event, considerable interest was shown in the question of "fiscal objection".

b) EBCO Colloquium (Brussels)

Derek Brett attended the colloquium held by EBCO (the European Bureau for Conscientious Objection) on "Conscientious Objection in the Proposed European Constitution", held at the European Parliament in Brussels on 8th April, 2005. This enabled him to make a number of useful contacts and also to give a rather higher profile to the question of fiscal objection in the general conscientious objection movement. CPTI's board member Carla Goffi is also working on the board of EBCO.

c) Mediterranean Social Forum (Barcelona)

Derek Brett attended the Mediterranean Social Forum in Barcelona, 17th - 19th June, 2005.

d) The European Network on Peace and Human Rights (Brussels)

This network (supported by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation) met from Thursday morning till Friday noon, October 20-21, 2005, in the European Parliament in Brussels. Carla Goffi, Abraham Gebreyesus and Dirk Panhuis attended, presented themselves as representatives of CPTI in workshops, and distributed the CPTI leaflet.

e) World Peace Forum (Vancouver, Canada)

John Randall attended the World Peace Forum, June 23-28, 2006. No presentations were specifically related to COMT, but there was a day of presentations on COMS by what was called "The Veterans and War Resisters Work Group". The closest to a mention of COMT in the Forum documents at the end of The Veterans and War Resisters Work Group Report: *"We call for respect for the Human Right of Conscientious Objection to War, including "selective objection" to particular conflicts and means of warfare, and call on Canada and all other states to grant sanctuary to soldiers from countries which deny them that right."*

Many of us learned what the Canadians are doing, and others learned what is happening in the US counter-recruitment, etc.

The greatest benefit of the Forum was the chance to meet and talk with people. A lot of people knew of Conscience Canada and the Peace Tax Seven (U.K.).

Many people took copies of the CPTI brochure and it was appreciated that there was a version in French.

f) Columbia (July 2006)

Derek Brett delivered a paper on "International Standards on Conscientious Objection to Military Service" at the International Encounter of Solidarity with Conscientious Objection in Columbia on July, 18-19, 2006.

g) WRI Triennial: Globalising Nonviolence (Paderborn, Germany)

Hannelore Morgenstern and Derek Brett attended the triennial, July 23-27, 2006, and gave some assistance with workshops on peace tax run by Gertie Brammer of Netzwerk Friedenssteuer.

9. FINANCES

a) Accounts 2004

Income: 3 471,18 €. Expenditure: 5 411,36 €. Deficit: 1 940,18 €. Assets: 11 549,43 €.

b) Accounts 2005

Income: 13 494,47 €. Expenditure: 12 079,63 €. Surplus: 1 414,84 €. Assets: 12 964,27 €.

Income and expenditures include an earmarked grant from The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust for research on military recruitment and conscientious objection.

For details, see accounts 2004 and 2005.

c) Financial situation

The general financial situation is not satisfactory. The income is below the expectations. Serious efforts have to be made for fundraising.