



Conscience Canada

Work for peace. Defend the earth. Defund the military!

Œuvrons pour la paix. Défendons la Terre. Définançons l'armée!

15 Fairview Avenue, Kitchener, ON N2H 3E7 — Tel. 604-223-9328

info@consciencecanada.ca — www.consciencecanada.ca

Fall 2023

Number 125

ISSN 1196-9970

Conscience Canada Launches Extended White Poppy Campaign

Wear a white poppy — peace with justice always!

Jan Slakov

Imagine mailing some white poppy cards and explaining to the clerk what they stand for, at the risk of taking too long. You turn to apologize to those in line behind you only to see their smiles of approval and requests for cards and poppies!

This is one of the encouraging incidents board member Bruna Nota shared in her "first white poppy report", for our extended white poppy campaign that begins on the International Day of Peace (Sept. 21) and runs until International Human Rights Day (Dec. 10). As we mourn the killing and destruction, we also want to celebrate life. Hence the choice of two widely known and respected UN dates to book-end the campaign.



Wallet cards are available; contact b.nota@icloud.com or Jan: (604) 223-9328. We also have limited numbers of sample white poppies to share.

CONTENTS

Why White Poppies?	2
Remembering our Humanity	3
What Could Yet Be Possible	4
Worth Repeating	5
Mystery of 'Love of Enemy'	6
News and Nexus	7
New CC Board Members	8
In Memoriam	8

I remember another report from the Conscience Canada (CC) newsletter of Feb. 1998. Kris Mansfield described her experience, standing on the fringes of a large Remembrance Day crowd, offering people white poppies. One man shared how grateful he felt to have the opportunity to wear a white poppy. They discussed an "alternative remembrance, one that stood for the rejection of militarism".

This resonated with me deeply, and I did my best to spread the idea. Thankfully, people much better at producing generous quantities of white poppies picked up the symbol, and it has taken root, from Raging Grannies to authors to peace groups to congregations; from Victoria to Toronto to Halifax, and when CC member Maryse Azzaria invited Échec à la guerre to pick up the idea, they arranged with a sheltered workshop to produce thousands. And since 2008 Teresa Gagné, Denis Plante and others in Vancouver have been distributing white poppies, maintaining their *peacepoppies.ca*

website and organizing city-sanctioned "Let Peace Be Their Memorial" ceremonies on Remembrance Day.

It seems that when people work to promote peace, they soon learn how the military industrial complex is supported by false narratives and how it's essential to, and embedded in, other systemic problems we face, from ecological harm to sexism and racism, to colonialism and extreme inequalities. We can quickly become overwhelmed, trying to take up the many worthy causes towards a healthier world.

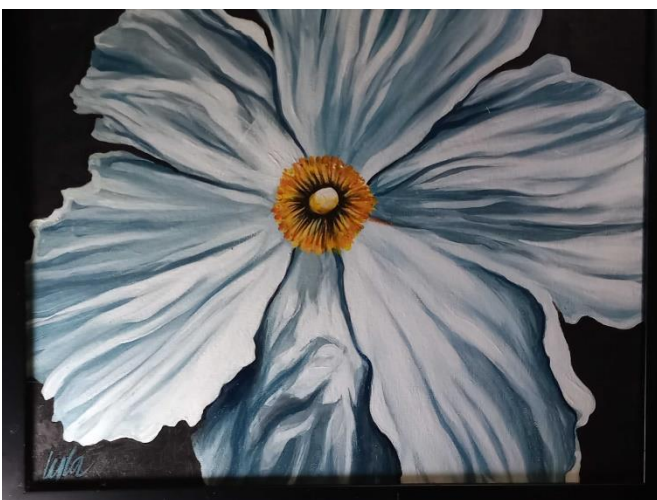
I remember once, feeling some despair, and Bruna said it helps to remember that our actions are like strands in a spider's web. Each strand helps maintain the structure, and when we feel overwhelmed, it helps to see that other people are caring for other strands.

It also helps to have a symbol that encompasses how the issues are interconnected. By extending the white poppy 'season' from the International Day of Peace, then to the International Day of Nonviolence (Oct. 2), Remembrance Day (Nov. 11) and the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women (Dec. 6) to International Human Rights Day, we're hoping to make clear the links between militarism and other systemic problems. More fundamentally, the poppy symbolizes, for us, a commitment to nonviolence, as a power, as an affirmation of life.

Kris Mansfield entitled an article she wrote in 1998 *Two Worlds*; she described how one world saw war as necessary, even sacred, while *she* wanted to live in a world free of warfare, where people are well nourished and children are allowed their childhood. We know, as Arundhati Roy said, that "another world is possible". With the white poppy as our symbol, we reach out and connect with others who want to assist the birth of that other world.

In a 1984 article in the *Globe and Mail* Richard Doyle wrote about the poem *In Flanders Fields* by John McCrae. Importantly he pointed out that "the words that are not often recalled when McCrae is remembered are his comment to a Canadian chaplain that the "foe" mentioned in the line "take up our quarrel with the foe" was not intended to be the German or Austrian soldier; it was the spirit of warfare. Allied soldiers had been assured this was a war to end war. The torch was the will to realize this ideal."

(Thanks to author Heather Menzies for finding Doyle's opinion piece.)



West Coast artist, activist Lyla Smith donated this painting to Conscience Canada. To participate in the silent auction, please contact CC.

Why White Poppies?

The white poppy originated as a symbol of resistance to war and to commemorate all victims of war, not just members of national militaries. It challenges glorification of war, including the assumption that we owe our freedoms to soldiers dying and killing on our behalf.

As the links between war, its military industrial complex and other systemic societal failings become clear, the white poppy's symbolism has broadened. It rejects militarism and associated ills, such as racism, sexism, imperialism, unsustainability. And it affirms our commitment to nonviolence and a joy-infused affirmation of life.

Remembering Our Humanity

Local community newspaper Letter-to-the-Editor

Things feel so out of control in our world now that it's understandable if sometimes people don't want to face how dire things are. As Doug Hewitt-White writes in his letter-to-the-editor of *The Millstone*: "The world is heating up fast. Contagion spreads around us. Entropy quickens. Yet we keep pouring money, resources, and enthusiastic commitment into a voracious military-industrial complex that flogs war, undermines our humanity and imperils all life on earth. And we fiddle. We play with our amusements. Distractions rule."

It's entirely possible we won't be able to save most species, including ourselves. If nothing else though, there is still our humanity to save. Doug's letter, further on:

"Sitting Bull when asked how he could continue to sing, dance, do art, do ceremony, be generous, when all the buffalo had been killed, smallpox had wiped out his tribe, and he was on the run. His answer was that he wanted to continue to be a human being.

Is it false hope, futile optimism, to struggle onwards regardless of whether we'll ever see deep fundamental change? I think not. Nor is it deflecting from 'the real world' to identify military and corporate fraudsters as a major toxic source for the dystopian future before us. We must look within ourselves for the strength to resist the peddling of bigger, better, faster, more powerful. Let us seek out quality over superficial style, scale and trivial cleverness.

'That enough is enough is enough to know', said Lao Tzu two and a half millennia ago.

So it is that I'm joining with others in wearing a visible symbol of my conscientious objection: the white poppy (originally created by the Women's Co-operative Guild in 1933). By wearing it (from Sept. 21, the International Day of Peace, until Dec. 10 International Human Rights Day) I commemorate all victims of war; I mourn the environmental devastation it creates; I reject war as a tool for social change; I call for dialog aimed at peaceful conflict resolution. Remembering is important but it is not enough!

If you're looking for ways to become a conscientious objector, check out [World Beyond War](#) and [Conscience Canada](#). Or just explore options with people around you."

To read Doug's entire letter, and see how it links to commemorating Hiroshima Day, go to the Millstone News, a not-for-profit volunteer run newspaper at <https://millstonenews.com/remembering-our-humanity/>.



CC BOARD

Scott Albrecht, Doug Hewitt-White,
Bruna Nota, Renée Nunan-Rappard,
Jan Slakov, Terri Sleeva,
Charles Small, Dwyer Sullivan,
Linda Thyer

Join Conscience Canada

Membership open to anyone supporting CC's objectives.
No membership fee (donations welcome!)

Visit: www.consciencecanada.ca/membership

Let us know if you can help out as a volunteer.
We need website and social media contributors.
New thinking & viewpoints are always welcome.

Email : info@consciencecanada.ca



Books Review

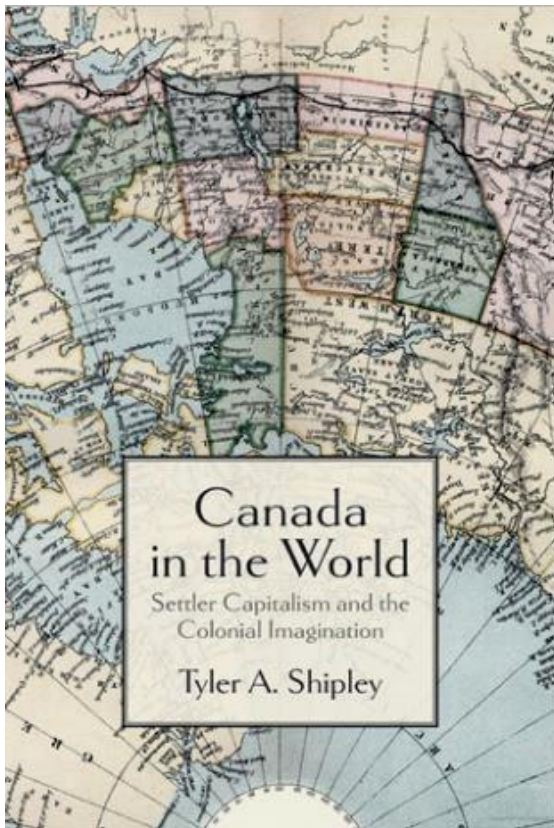
Insight into What Could Yet Be Possible

Bruna Nota

Did you know that in the 1960s, the US and the USSR made plans for complete disarmament? In 1964 the two world powers made great progress in their proposals for a phased-in general disarmament. They projected that their national military apparatus would be replaced by a small security force. They committed to contributing to an international UN police force and foresaw a regime of inspection and verification to ensure compliance¹.

The book that provided this revelation to me is *The Canadian Economy and Disarmament* by Gideon Rosenbluth². Published in 1967, in the wake of the initiatives taken by the two world superpowers, this book analyses the potential economic impact of total disarmament for the Canadian economy.

The book's concluding paragraph reads: "*With a modicum of planning, the economic consequences of disarmament can be viewed entirely as opportunities rather than as 'problems'. The services of labour and resources valued at about \$1.5 billion per year can be freed for uses that will benefit the welfare, health, and education of the community, raise the rate of technical progress, and enable us to contribute more to the development of the less fortunate areas.*" This forceful conclusion derives from a detailed economic analysis. Environmental and social benefits of disarmament were not quantified.



Why do institutions of war, empty as they are of any redeeming feature, endure?

Tyler A. Shipley³, provides answers in his 2020 book *Canada in the World. Settler Capitalism and the Colonial Imagination*. It starts with his analysis of the European colonizers and settlers' foreign policies towards the Indigenous Nations. It then reviews Canada's engagements in the world since Confederation. It concludes with "*the core material and ideological premises of Canada—settler capitalism and colonial imagination—are inseparable from what Canada is and does.*" (p. 508). The discrepancy between the projected image of Canada and the reality of its actions made reading this book emotionally difficult for me.

Both books, from different time frames, methodologies and emphases, offer evidence that Canada could be a strong force for good if we were to make a substantive shift in values towards a culture that embraces total disarmament and a just sharing of all resources. It requires a fundamental conversion. That is, a conversion from an extractive, dominant worldview to a worldview

that embodies a profound respect of the LAW of Land, Air and Water. The LAW that supersedes all national or tribal human laws.

Such a shift, such a conversion, will occur only as an increasing number of citizens challenge the underlying philosophical, economic and hierarchical discriminations that are making war and violence seem palatable and even glorious. We must abandon the comfort zone and call out the lies that

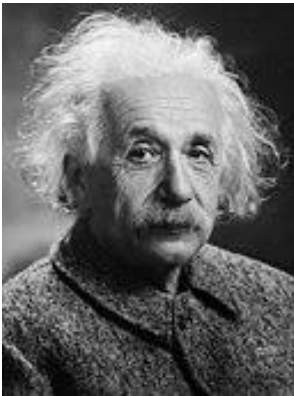
continue to find fertile ground in the present socio-economic systems, in the present dominant worldview.

We can do so by refusing to pay for the ongoing rape of Earth and its inhabitants.

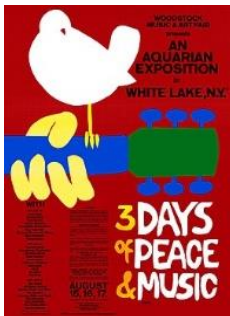
1. "Current Disarmament Proposals as of March 1, 1964" published by World Law Fund. Available at University of California (Berkeley) Library <https://lawcat.berkeley.edu/record/40341> (access requires account login)
2. Professor of economics at major universities. He taught and wrote economic theory and its application for individual behaviour, corporate organization and government policy. His rigorous approach to scholarship and community involvement was guided by his commitment to social justice.
3. Holding a PhD in political science from York University, he is professor of culture, society and commerce at Humber College.

Worth Repeating

Albert Einstein in a letter to Norman Salit (4 March 1950); quoted in "The Einstein Papers. A Man of Many Parts" The New York Times (29 March 1972)



"A human being is a part of the whole, called by us 'the Universe', a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest — a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. Nobody is able to achieve this completely, but the striving for such achievement is in itself a part of the liberation and a foundation for inner security."



Jimi Hendrix American songwriter, singer, guitarist, — a great celebrated musician of the 20th century. (Remember Jimi's unforgettable rendition of the Star Spangled Banner at Woodstock in '69?)

"When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace."



Heather Menzies Order of Canada recipient, lifelong anti-war activist, writer, speaker, filmmaker, adjunct professor at the School of Indigenous and Canadian Studies, Carleton University

"As I watch the rationalizations for a creeping escalation of war in Ukraine, I am reminded of what the long-time Canadian peace and anti-war activist Muriel Duckworth pointed out: that war is the greatest single cause of pollution and environmental degradation. She mostly had the natural environment and the health of the climate in mind. But the statement can equally be applied to the social and psycho-social environment. This war like all other wars is

spreading trauma, sparking and aggravating mental illness and turning differences into deepening hatred and the impulse to more violence. People are documenting war crimes. But war itself is a crime; a crime against humanity and against nature. "

Exploring the Mystery of 'Love of Enemy'

Jan Slakov

I am not a Christian, and yet I have found books by Christian Leonard Desroches on nonviolence truly helpful for better understanding what nonviolence can be in my life.

His most recent book, *Jesus and Mature Love: Reflections on Love of Enemy*, at only 65 pages in length, feels like a distillation of his learnings. I can imagine it wouldn't have been easy to select only the most powerful and transformative quotes, reflections and stories, ones that we can come back to over time, to learn from again.

With this first reading, a couple quotes stood out for me:

"The cancer of oppression and injustice and crime and exploitation was allowed to grow and finally the people had to fight with the means available to them . . . armed struggle. The church arrogantly said violence was bad. But spirituality and work with people's consciences had never been done. We have no right to hope to harvest what we have not sown." Miguel d'Escoto, Nicaraguan priest



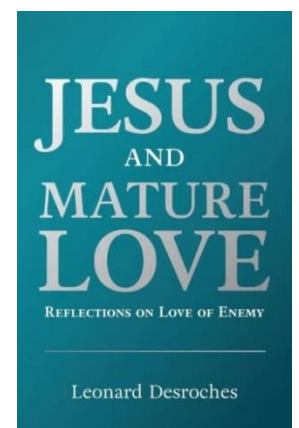
Leonard Desroches

"We've often criticized religions for their justification of violence. Certainly religions are guilty because of what they contribute to violence, but especially because of what they don't contribute to nonviolence." Jean Marie Muller, French historian of nonviolence

How, I wonder, do we sow the seeds of nonviolence? Desroches offers insight, for instance when he reminds us of how Sophie and Hans Scholl, members of the White Rose resistance group in Nazi Germany, were raised.

He also describes how United Church members in 'Affirming Congregations' "took the time to go through a process of self-education and possible conversion" regarding LGBTQ+ people. We could, he suggests, have a similar process for the renunciation of war and affirmation of love of enemy.

Included in the book are texts from Mennonites and Pax Christi, with concrete ideas for living 'love of enemy' (nonviolence). Desroches also recounts some of his own experience. For me, as I'm sure there would be for others, there was a jolt of recognition. We can find 'enemies' in our communities; someone threatened Desroches' life for confronting serious abuse on his street. When I learned of bullying aligned with anti-conservation forces where I lived, I decided to take it on, in ways others were not willing to. I realized then that my 'training' in nonviolence, mainly through my involvement in Conscience Canada, was invaluable. I observed how, when I was free of fear, I could wish the best for the people involved in the bullying, and have the strength to keep working to hold them to account. When fear entered, there was no real place for the caring 'love of enemy'. (It was a complex, fascinating situation. It opened my eyes to how important – and **difficult** – it is to reform policing, in particular the RCMP. I continue to look for people interested in taking on this challenge, and to work with.)



Desroches alludes to the link between love and fearlessness. He might find, as a couple of us on the CC board are finding, that what Four Arrows (co-author of *Restoring the Kinship Worldview*) teaches about Indigenous ways of handling fear, is of great value.

Even as we live through this 'Great Unravelling', there is still such wonderful energy in 'the Great Turning' to explore and put into practice! Desroches' *Jesus and Mature Love* is a great gateway.

News and Nexus

Toronto Hiroshima Day Event

Bruna Nota and Murray Lumley, at the Conscience Canada table at Toronto's Hiroshima Day event. With the help of friends, Bruna already had a good supply of white poppies and postcards on hand to distribute





**GLOBAL DAYS OF ACTION
TO END WAR ON UKRAINE
OCTOBER 1 - 8, 2023**

**PEACE NOW!
STOP THE WAR!
STOP NATO!**

- FUND PEACE NOT WAR
- CANADA OUT OF NATO
- NEGOTIATIONS, NOT ESCALATION
- WATER BOMBERS NOT FIGHTER JETS
- YES TO CLIMATE JUSTICE & PEACE, NO TO NATO

Coordinated Cross-Canada by:
Canada-Wide Peace & Justice Network
Find actions in Canada at:
peaceandjusticenetwork.ca

Following the [International Summit for Peace in Ukraine](#), the International Peace Bureau is calling on civil society organizations in all countries to join a [Week of Global Mobilization for Peace in Ukraine](#) from **September 30 to October 8, 2023**. The common goal is to call an immediate ceasefire and peace negotiations to end the war in Ukraine.

Fund Peace Not War!

The [Canada-Wide Peace and Justice Network](#) is urging people to join in this global mobilization to end the war in Ukraine. This conflict has caused immense loss of life and suffering for the Ukrainian people and their civilian infrastructure. The war in Ukraine has prompted an explosion in **military** spending in Canada. The government has so far delivered \$8.5 billion in arms and funding to Ukraine which will prevent Canada from investing adequately in social housing, public healthcare, education, job creation, and climate solutions.

Peace Brigades International (PBI) flags how military human rights violators are involved in RCMP repression in Canada

In 2020 Canadian railways and ports were temporarily shut down in protest over the arrest of Wet'suwet'en land defenders, who had denied permission for the fracked gas Coastal GasLink (CGL) pipeline to cross their territory. Despite calls from the UN for Canada to stop the project, numerous environmental violations and ongoing resistance to the project, it continues, threatening some of Canada's most clean water and healthy ecosystems, as well as contributing to blowing through BC's efforts to reduce GHG emissions.

In an August 2023 post, PBI cites various sources to shine a



David Petraeus with KKR logo on his vest in 2023; and in Iraq in 2007

light on troubling links between human rights abuses in Iraq and on Wet'suwet'en territory. US General David Petraeus has been linked to abuses which occurred at detention centres in Iraq in 2003 – 2005. In 2014 Petraeus became a partner at KKR, which owns a 65% equity interest in the CGL pipeline which is being pushed through Wet'suwet'en lands despite consistent, clear opposition from local Indigenous leaders.

For more details on this see the PBI post [Nagata links RCMP C-IRG, Coastal GasLink, former CIA Director David Petraeus and US military counter-insurgency manual](#)

CC's New Board members

Charles Small has lived in Dundas (near Hamilton) since 1994. He is originally from Montreal and has also lived in Winnipeg. He has a longtime interest in progressive politics and activism and is also a member of Independent Jewish Voices. Professionally, he has a background in education, media, religious studies and computer systems management. For many years, along with his wife, Lily, he has been Executive Director of an arts and drama education program for young people.



Over the past year two new people have stepped forward to join our CC board. Terri Sleeva and Renée Nunan-Rappard both live in Saskatchewan and their prairie perspective is much appreciated as CC maps out a new emphasis and direction. Welcome Terri and Renée.

Don Woodside — In Memoriam

It is with sadness and humble honour that we hear this week of the passing of Don Woodside.

Don contributed over the years in so many ways as a peace activist. He was one of the people who worked with Bruna Nota to prevent CC from being shut down in 2002. He went on to play a key role in our parliamentary lobbying effort of 2005, in the creation of the (high quality!) film on our website and he took on the job of president as well. The array of peace activities was wide: lobbying hard-hearted MP's, joining anti-war marches, conducting peace vs war looney polls, writing op-ed articles, and doing peace tax talks (without TED).



Don had extensive experience with meditation, and was involved with Mindfulness Hamilton since its inception in 2013. He wrote of enjoying "teaching beginners, assisting more experienced practitioners with the many obstacles which can arise, and finding ways to transform our workaday life with mindful attention and compassion."

As we all work to be good ancestors, [let us remember Don](#) who did that so well. In some cultures, ancestors are still present. We hope this can be true for Don, who has so much to offer.

Our condolences to Harriet, Sarah, Simon and other family members.

We shout out Don Woodside - Presente!!

A B O U T

This newsletter is produced by Conscience Canada, an NGO working since 1978 to empower our members and all of society:

- to assert their conscientious objection to having their money conscripted, and earth's resources exploited, to pay for war and preparation for war;
- to champion the peace and well-being of all humankind; and
- to demand an end to all complicity and support for war and militarism

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of Conscience Canada. This newsletter is available on-line at www.consciencecanada.ca. If you are receiving a printed copy, let us know if you would prefer the on-line e-version (in colour, less expensive to produce!).