

Report by the Board of CPTI

(period: April 2000 – August 2002)
to the 5th General Assembly in Hirschluch/Berlin

- 1. Board members:** Erik Hummels (Netherlands, chair and, since spring 2001, also treasurer a.i.), Marian Franz (vice-chair, USA), Dirk Panhuis (secretary, Belgium), Gerald Drewett (treasurer, U.K., resigned dec. 2000), Pedro Otaduy (Spain), Cosimo Tomaselli (Italy), Christa Voigt (Germany), Jackie Hoskins (U.K., coopted by the board since Spring 2001)
- 2. Representatives:**
New York: **Marian Franz, John Randall, and Rosa Packard**
Geneva: **Dirk Panhuis, Bart Horeman,** and (since April 2002) **Derek Brett**
- 3. Board meetings:**
 - 8th meeting: July 6 and 9, 2000: Washington (USA): all 7 board members, 2 representatives, and 10 others
 - 9th meeting: Dec. 9, 2000: (Brussels, Belgium): 5 board members and 5 others
 - 10th meeting: (by e-mail) ending June 6, 2001
 - 11th meeting: Feb. 2, 2002: Leuven (Belgium): 5 board members and 1 representative
- 4. Work in New York**
 - a) **During 2001** CPTI representatives (Rosa Packard, John Randall, Marian Franz) attended **various briefings, luncheons and meetings** with other NGO working groups to assess how we might work together. Our important plans for a DPI (Department of Public Information) briefing scheduled for September 10-12 were abruptly canceled by the tragic events in New York City of Sep 11, 2001.
 - b) June 12, 2001. In New York, our representatives to the UN introduced and moderated an interfaith **panel discussion** *"Educating our Youth About the Human Right of Conscientious Objection."* It was cosponsored with CPTI by FOR and the Peace Caucus. Members of the panel were Michael Hovey, Paxi Christi, Doug Hostetter, Peace Churches, Ibrahim Ramey, Muslim Peace Fellowship, Janet Chisolm, Episcopal Peace Fellowship, and Betty Reardon, Jewish Peace Fellowship and Global Campaign for Peace Education. We arranged to have the program taped, transcribed and edited. The transcript is posted on the CPTI web page.
 - c) A unit on conscientious objection was written for and printed in *Learning to Abolish War: Teaching Toward a Culture of Peace* (Book 2, page 126 -129) developed by Betty Reardon and Alicia Cabezudo for *The Hague Appeal for Peace Global Campaign for Peace Education*. This unit refers students to resources and links on the CPTI web page. Copies of the manual are available from the Hague Appeal for Peace office in New York or Geneva.
 - d) **2002.** Feb. 28. At a meeting with staff at UN office for **Mennonite** Central Committee we learned that conscientious objection is one of their priorities and that **they would welcome working together at the UN with other NGOs.**

- e) March 25, 2002. **Meeting with Interim Deputy Director for UN High Commissioner on Human Rights**, Michael O'Flaherty and with Associate Human Rights officer. Representatives from Mennonite Central Committee UN office and Quaker UN office attended along with CPTI representatives. Mr. O'Flaherty gave a concise overview of how the Human Rights system works and practical suggestions for ways to help C.O. become more visible on the various related UN agendas. Abdellfaltah Amor is the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief. Working Groups report to the Sub-Commission on Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.
- f) May 14, 2002. **Luncheon at Quaker House with Rachel Brett** (Quaker UNO-Geneva office). We met with guests from various organizations to **inform ourselves** regarding CO issues at the UN and assess commitment of other groups to working together on the issue. This set the foundation for a UN working group on Conscientious Objection. Rachel Brett helped us understand the history of the explicit recognition by the United Nations of C.O. as a human right derived from, freedom of religion and conscience. Conscientious objection is **on the agenda** of the UN Commission on Human Rights (Geneva) every year and there is a resolution every two years. Current goals include a focus on **establishing best practices in order to set standards that the Commission on Human Rights, the Human Rights Committee and the work of Special Rapporteurs** connected with the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights can encourage states to follow. / UN standards are close to those established by Amnesty International which frequently issues reports on imprisoned conscientious objectors. The Human Rights Committee which monitors the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights can question states about their practices and laws concerning conscientious objection countries when states report to the HRC on their human rights record every five years. / NGO groups are often the source of "implementation" and can go beyond UN standards. They can be of consultative help by giving a range of specific examples from various regions and by reporting on best practices as well as practices where established standards are not being upheld. Some countries are (re)writing their constitutions - an opportunity for NGOs to bring forward information about best practices. We purchased copies of the book published by the Quaker UN office and War Resisters International: *"A Conscientious Objectors Guide to the UN Human Rights System."* These books are distributed to concerned NGO representatives and to members of the board of the Peace Tax Foundation. A follow up meeting will be held June 26th at the Mennonite Central Committee office at the UN.
- g) June 15, 2002. **United Nations Working Group on Conscientious Objection (UNWGCO) is formed.** Present were representatives of the office of, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Mennonite Central Committee, Pax Christi, CPTI, (Rosa Packard, John Randall, Marian Franz). Others interested are: Peace Action/Peace Caucus, Hague Appeal for Peace, War Resisters League. Minutes are sent to Human Rights Watch, Quaker UN office in Geneva (Derek & Rachel Brett), and to members of the CPTI board. We send information to Peace Education Center at Columbia University, International Peace Research Association, Human Rights Watch. UNWGCO will also assess the work of Ricardo Esquivia at Centro Christiano para Justicia Paz y Accion Noviolenta in **Columbia** and its possible connection with issues of conscientious objection. We will work with conscientious objector actions in other countries, especially **Korea** and **Israel**. Peace education will be on monthly agenda to make CO more visible.

- h) **A special rapporteur for conscientious objection** may be appointed at the UN. In the mean time Rachel Brett's advice is to continue work on the issue through the special rapporteur for religious freedom. We will look at past reports of the special rapporteur on religious freedom to see how the CO issue has been covered and to report. These reports are available at UN High Commissioner on Human Rights.
- i) July 14, 2002. **UN Working Group on CO defines its purpose:** "We are a group of Non Governmental Organization representatives of both secular and religious groups at the United Nations in New York. We work to realize the specific goal stated in the Declaration and Agenda for Action approved by We the peoples... Millennium Forum, May 22-26, 2000 (page 17, under Universal Realization of Human Rights, last par.)."
- j) Aug 21, 2002. **Meeting at UN Mission with US Mission on Human Rights** with Michelle Zack (adviser) and Peggy Kerry (NGO Liaison) for the UN Mission. Purpose of the visit: to introduce the New York NGO Working Group on Conscientious Objection; to request that the US government respond to the UNHCHR request for country reports on best practices in regard to COMS; and to offer CPTI's help.
The Mission replied that it has not yet received a request for this report from the UNHCHR office. Since a change in the High Commissioner for Human Rights is imminent, we will seek the help of Derek and Rachel Brett for proper timing on urging the US to respond to the request later in the year, and on which missions might help us in New York to encourage the US to respond.
In the short years of our existence we believe we have laid a foundation for fruitful work on realizing CO to military taxes and service in international law
- k) **We continue to attend selected meetings** of relevant caucuses, committees and NGO briefings at UN Headquarters. John Randall, who manages the web page for CPTI is particularly interested in the potential for internet communication on our issue at the UN. Marian Franz has come to New York for our events, speaking about CPTI at Peace Caucus, the Values Caucus and Fellowship of Reconciliation staff meetings. Rosa Packard has organized events and worked on printed resources, including a regular Letter from the UN printed in the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund newsletter.

5. Work in Geneva

- a) **2000.** The board decided not to pursue at this time its plan to submit a request to the UN Human Rights Committee for a new General Comment on COMT.
- b) **2001.** A written statement "*The human right not to pay for war and the human duty to pay for peace*" was drafted by CPTI and presented to the UN CHR (E/CN.4/2001/NGO/101).
- c) 2001, first week of April. For the first time Dirk Panhuis and Bart Horeman attended one week of the 57th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights in the "Palais des Nations" in Geneva. They became acquainted with the whole machinery, the plenary meetings, the role of NGO's, special meetings organized by NGO's on certain themes, meeting of CONGO (conference of NGO's) with the Bureau of the 57th session, etc.
- d) An oral statement was made in plenary meeting by Bart Horeman on April 5, 2001.
- e) **2002,** first week of April. Dirk Panhuis and Bart Horeman attended one week of the 58th Session of the UN CHR. There was a delay in the agenda because UN Headquarters in

N.Y. cancelled all evening meetings (too costly) and because of some extra meetings with closed doors on the Israel/Palestine issue.

- f) Dirk and Bart had several contacts and discussions with representatives of NGO's. COMT seems a logical extension of COMS to most NGO's.
- g) As a result of an appeal launched to NGO's based in Switzerland Derek Brett (U.K., living in Geneva, husband of Rachel Brett of QUNO) is willing to be CPTI's permanent representative at the UNO-Geneva.
- h) The oral statement prepared by Dirk Panhuis was not read in plenary but distributed by the UN CHR to the official delegates. Derek Brett left copies on the NGO tables.
- i) Derek Brett has become familiar with the UN Com HR, the Sub-Commission on HR, CONGO (Conference of NGO's) (board meeting on June 20th-21st), their NGO Committee on freedom of religion and belief, and the UN Committee on HR. He is also exploring whether COMT could/should be dealt with under item 18 ("freedom of religion or belief") rather than under item 11g ("civil and political rights, including the question of COMS")

6. Bertrand Russel Peace Foundation Conferences

- a) In December 2000 BRPF organized its second consultation on "Peace and Human Rights" in the buildings of the European Parliament (some 80 mainly European participants). Marian Franz, Jackie Hoskins, and Dirk Panhuis represented CPTI. David Bassett, Carla Goffi (Contribuables pour la paix, Belgium) and Koen Moens (VRAK) were there as well.
- b) Dirk Panhuis had prepared a paper on COMT, which was read and explained in a workshop. COMT was included in the final text. BRPF works toward a European Network for Peace and Human Rights.
- c) On January 31st and February 1st, 2002, another meeting on Peace and Human Rights as well as on the Pentagon's Full Spectrum Dominance, was called together in the E.P. in Brussels. Marian Franz and Jackie Hoskins attended, as well as Carla Goffi (Contribuables pour la paix, Belgium). Marian Franz & Jackie Hoskins (US and UK Peace Tax Campaigns), made a presentation on conscientious objection to taxes for military force. Ours was one of five presentations in the largest workshop that drew over 2/3 of the 300 conference participants. **The final communiqué** of the conference included: *"As a matter of urgency we strive to... Give support to prisoners of conscience; and to those campaigning for **the right to conscientious objection to military service and taxation.**"* This experience indicates the importance of CPTI's presence at all international and major national peace conferences.

7. Publicity

- a) Reports/interviews about the activities in New York, Geneva, and Brussels (written by Marian Franz, Rosa Packard, and Dirk Panhuis) appeared in some of the national newsletters of WTR-PTC's.
- b) The web site (www.cpti.ws) is taken care of by web master John Randall.

8. Accounts 2000 and 2001: see annexes.

9. Budgets 2002, 2003, and 2004: see annexes.