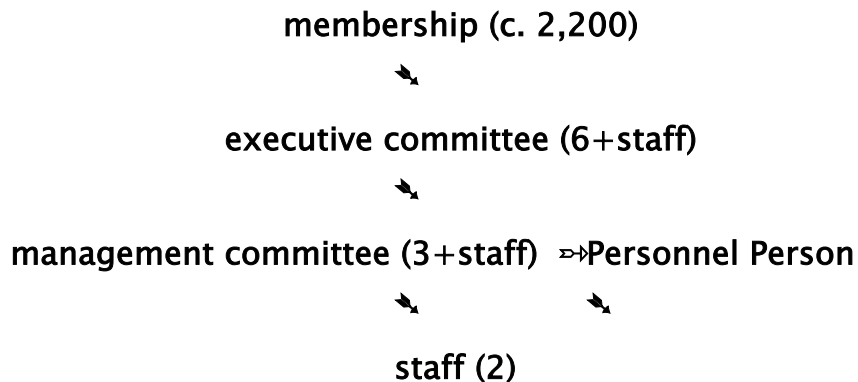


country report to 9th International Conference on War Tax Resistance and Peace Tax Campaigns

1. name of organisation

conscience THE PEACE TAX CAMPAIGN

2. organisational structure



3. budget and budgetary categories

approx. £55,000

Income: grants, donations from members, bank interest

Expenditure: employment costs, training and travel, advertising, conferences, printed materials, newsletter and postage, committees, communications, office supplies, rent and rates, services and insurance

4. main goal of organisation

conscience campaigns for the legal right for those who have a conscientious objection to war to have the military part of their taxes spent on peacebuilding initiatives

5. current size and scope of the movement

membership of 2,200 almost entirely UK

6. report on recent history and current status regarding:

legislative/parliamentary developments

The year 2000 was dominated by the Human Rights Act coming into force. This Act brought UK law into line with the European Convention on Human Rights.

conscience commissioned a barrister to assess the impact of the Act for conscientious objectors to taxation for military purposes and published the report.

The general election dominated the first half of 2001. Every **conscience**-supporting MP who stood was re-elected, but 13 of our supporters in the last parliament stood down. Although there was little change in the political make-up of the parliament, retirements meant that there were over 100 new MPs elected and these were the focus of our post-election lobbying.

Parliamentary petition (Early Day Motion) tabled in February 2002, signed by 32 Members of Parliament:

Conscientious objection to war

That this House

condemns the violence and devastation that occurred in the United States of America on 11 September and extends sympathy to all those who have been bereaved or injured;

calls upon the Government to pursue, through international co-operation, every diplomatic means available in bringing the perpetrators of these terrorist acts to justice under the law; to pursue means of addressing the root causes of global terrorism by means of a long term programme of concerted international action;

supports the principle of conscientious objection as a basic human right and therefore believes that those who have a conscientious objection to war should have the legal right to have the military part of their taxes spent on peacebuilding.

conscience support in UK Parliament in 2001: Labour Party (49), Conservative (1), Liberal Democrats (4), Scottish National Party (5), Scottish Socialist Party (1), Plaid Cymru (3), Independent (1)

conscience support in European Parliament in 2001: Green Party (2), Labour Party (8), Liberal Democrats (2), Scottish National Party (2), Plaid Cymru (2)

war tax resistance

- as the war in Afghanistan began **conscience** saw increased interest in war tax resistance and several members have entered into war tax resistance since the last international conference
- **conscience** is working with legal professionals to take forward war tax resistance strategically

relationships with religious bodies, civil rights organisations, other groups

- **conscience** has close links with the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and Mennonite Mission Network
- **conscience** is working with organisations concerned with the prevention and transformation of violent conflict

7. peace-related projects supported by your organisation

- through membership of the Network for Peace **conscience** supports the promotion of peace

8. publications and other resources produced by your organisation, other recent publications that you consider especially significant

conscience newsletter, annual review, £10 leaflet, briefing 'paying for peace not war – is it a human right?', lobby briefing (Dec 2000 – paying for peace not war), lobby briefing (Aug 2001 – writing to your MP), 2001 post-election lobby pack

9. plans for the near future

plans for **conscience** in 2002 include:

in celebration - the organisation we now know as **conscience** was founded 25 years ago by Stanley Keeble. We will be holding an event in the autumn to celebrate the contribution of all those involved in the successes of the campaign so far

in parliament – our work continues with the new All Party Group on Peace and Conflict Resolution. Members' involvement with lobbying will, as always, play a key part in raising the issue with MPs. We will also be attending party conferences and policy consultations

in court – we are working with a new organisation set up to provide a free legal service to peace and justice activists. Their strategic advice will help war tax resisters to get the best from any future court cases

in London – **conscience** annual event goes from strength to strength