

Our government, as of autumn 2005, has changed from a conservative coalition to a "Red-Green" one, 'consisting of Socialist, Centre and Labor parties. The first 2 have given us positive responses to our request for support for a peacefund/tax law, in the beginning of their term, but the going has been rough for them. Therefore our hope for speedy action to again present the law proposal is on hold. We keep our hopes up and are a bit encouraged by a personal reply from Finance minister Halvorsen (socialist) complimenting us on our tireless peace work and writing "in the long run it is possible that this cause will be considered". Representative Langeland who initially proposed the bill in 2000 has, in writing, promised to do so again. Our group has been hampered by hospitalization, moving, leaving an unproportional part of activity on Bjørg Bergs shoulders.

ACTIVITIES Our success in convincing Re township to send a request to Parliament to reopen the Peacefund law proposal encouraged us to lobby a nearby City Council, Tonsberg, to do the same. This was facilitated by a new law, Peoples' Initiative, whereby 300 signatures supporting a cause are enough to have this cause put on the council's agenda. It is then obligatory for them. We were the first group to utilize the Peoples Initiative in Tonsberg. After many days gathering signatures, many conversations with the political parties, the big day came. A journalist who had previously interviewed us on National radio sent a colleague down to cover the event and to interview us afterward. This program was sent on the radio later combined with an interview with Re's Mayor where he explained that if communities neglected such issues, the central government would not pick up peoples interest in them. He is also one of the worldwide Mayors for Abolishing Atomic weapons, as "such weapons would have a tendency to drop down on townships". We were disappointed that the proposal was voted down; surprised that only one vote was lacking for its passage, this being a very conservative city. We have given information to Quakers in other parts of Norway, Peace organizations as to how this lobbying can be done, hoping for a domino effect, which has not yet materialized, aside from Oslo, having begun the process.

- Schools: In 2005, 2 hours about war, peace, Peacefund for ca. 50 pupils ages 17-18 and their teachers, with a local and a central politician participating. In 2006 a similar program at a highschool (ca. 50, ages 15), with teachers attending, assisted by Kristin Eskeland, experienced in reconciliation amongst youth internationally, and Kristin Skarsholt, student, showing a film about peace tax resistance.
- Many articles, phone-calls, letters in the media/ to politicians.
- Given a free booth at a health fair to present the cause/gather signatures.
- Profiled U N Day for Nonviolence, 21 Sept this year, it being practically unknown here. Translated Kofi Annans appeal for that day for the newspaper.

Apart from grass-roots work, it is imperative that we convince other political parties to support us, otherwise, until that is done, it will probably be useless for rep. Langeland to propose the Peacefund law bill again.

Friendly Greetings, for our Peacefund group, (Bjørg Berg, Bernt Skarsholt, Unni Skarsholt, Judy Rangnes and myself),

Elizabeth Howell Chapman