

**C**oalition to  
**O**ppose the  
**A**rms  
**T**rade

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Dear reader,

November 19, 2012

This issue of COAT's magazine, on Canada Pension Plan (CPP) investments in firms selling military and "security" products to Israel, is being mailed as yet another conflagration engulfs the Middle East. Since last week, when the Bonn International Centre for Conversion released its annual report ranking Israel as *the most militarised country on earth*, the besieged people of Gaza have once again been bearing the overwhelming brunt of the violence.

While many Canadians are comforted by the myth that they are neutral, uninvolved and somehow above the fray, the truth is that *we are being forced to support one side in this conflict, namely Israel*. For example, in this and the previous issue of *Press for Conversion!*, I've detailed how Canada's largest pension schemes have invested our retirement savings in a host of Wall Street corporations that profit from Israel's institutions of war and apartheid.

*COAT is no stranger to such contentious topics*. Since 1990, *Press for Conversion!* has covered many anti-war themes that are disarmingly controversial, not only for the general public, but within the mainstream peace movement as well. In fact, COAT's magazine has deliberately focused on many difficult subjects precisely because they have been ignored, neglected or debated by activists. For example, our magazine has investigated such subjects as NATO's illegal "humanitarian" bombing of Yugoslavia, the centuries-old use of phoney pretexts to trigger public support for US wars, the romanticisation of deadly warplanes performing stunts at militarised Canadian air shows, Canada's role in empowering Afghan warlords and drug kingpins, our military's secretive participation in the Iraq War, hidden Canadian involvement in the "Star Wars"/BMD-weapons program, and Canada's active support for the 2004 *coup d'etat* that empowered a brutal, two-year dictatorship in Haiti.

Since its formation in 1988, COAT has organised many campaigns against Canada's part in various wars and the international arms trade. Our first project was to expose and oppose this country's largest weapons exhibition, the now-defunct ARMX. COAT brought together dozens of groups and held numerous events, including a huge protest in which thousands rallied outside the arms bazaar. *One successful result of our work was an Ottawa City Council resolution prohibiting arms shows on municipal property*. This unique, Ottawa bylaw lasted 20 years! However, despite COAT's concerted efforts, Ottawa councillors overturned the ban in 2009.

Struggling against the stream on these and other issues has made it difficult for COAT to survive financially. We receive no funding from any governments, corporations or foundations. To continue this work, COAT relies entirely on individual subscribers and donors like you. Such grassroots support is essential if we are to press on with this work. *Thanks!! I hope you'll find this issue useful in the struggle!*

In solidarity,

Richard Sanders, coordinator, COAT

P.S. If you order extra copies of this issue, we'll throw in an equal number of copies of the last issue (part 1) for free!

*COAT needs  
your support*

Please ...

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*extra copies!*

P.P.S. Thanks to the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) for donating COAT's first folded, full-colour issue! For more than 20 years, NUPGE has been among the national unions here in Ottawa that have donated photocopying for our publication. A special thanks goes to NUPGE's National President, James Clancy, for this issue of *Press for Conversion!* and for his stalwart support for COAT over two long decades!