

This brochure was produced by the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee, a coalition of local, regional and national groups involved in war tax resistance issues. While the information in this flyer is primarily addressed to Christians, NWTRCC itself is a nonsectarian, independent organization. Information on local support groups, war tax counseling, and additional resources is available on request. Contributions will help us to continue our work of building and supporting the war tax resistance movement.

Original brochure text by George Rodkey of Northern California War Tax Resistance. Updated 1993 by Eric Mayer, New Call to Peacemaking, Richmond, IN. Updated 1/17



NATIONAL WAR TAX RESISTANCE COORDINATING COMMITTEE

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NWTRCC is a coalition of local, regional and national groups supportive of war tax resistance. NWTRCC will put you in touch with groups in your area if you contact us at the address below. Contributions will help us continue our work and are appreciated!

Local Contact:

NWTRCC sees poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, economic exploitation, environmental destruction and militarization of law enforcement as integrally linked with the militarism that we abhor. Through the redirection of our tax dollars, NWTRCC members contribute directly to the struggle for peace and justice for all.



“A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.”

Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Are You Praying for Peace but still Paying for War?

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Christ's Way

One of the most complete violations of Christ's commandments is the waging of war—the organized, efficient destruction of human beings. To advocate violence, according to Jesus Christ, is to exist outside God's kingdom: “If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over . . . But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.” (John 18:36) Jesus' very betrayal and arrest serve as yet another exhortation against killing. When a follower of his strikes the slave of

“We are war tax resisters because we have discovered some doubt as to what belongs to Caesar and what belongs to God, and have decided to give the benefit of the doubt to God.”

John Stoner, on a poster from Mennonite Central Committee

the high priest, Jesus cries out, “No more of this!” Then Jesus touches the injured man and heals him. (Luke 22:51) In his parables such as the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), Jesus makes clear our inheritance—a commitment to love our neighbors. Through his own example of sacrificing his life, Jesus shows us that love reaches its fulfillment when extended to the enemy. Love, as Christ taught, is not merely an emotion, but a concrete action. Thus it is not surprising that for its first two centuries the early Church forbade Christians from serving in the Roman army.

More and more Christians are finding militarism incompatible with Christ's teachings. The advent of modern warfare threatens to annihilate God's creation through the use of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. Military aggression against other countries has become a fact of life we cannot ignore. The United States requires Christians to support

militarism and violence through the payment of federal taxes. And while the government provides alternative military service to conscientious objectors of draft age, there is no such provision for taxpayers who are conscientiously opposed to war and militarism.

Christian Stewardship

We are called to use the gifts we are given, both material and spiritual, in a responsible manner. Through the Church, many Christians share their resources to meet the needs of the world, but at the same time we are each contributing over 50% of our tax dollars to the U.S. government's military budget. Each day the U.S. spends over \$3.5 billion on the military, while 21,000 people die of starvation worldwide. Let us ask ourselves whether our works of compassion are not undone a thousand times by our voluntary contribution to destroy the “enemies” through our tax payments. Many Christians have come to believe that Christian stewardship requires them to refuse to pay taxes for war. Many more are giving this issue prayerful consideration.

Christ, Not Caesar

Being obedient to the laws of our country is generally recognized as following the Gospel, but conflicts between allegiance to God and to the government sometimes arise and deserve our careful consideration. The apostle Peter's declaration that “we must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29) summarizes many Christians' approach to this problem of conscience. While Paul seems to describe the government in Romans 13 as the limited instrument of good, he concludes the passage with a declaration about the overarching demands of love. “Love never does any wrong to the neighbor, hence love is the fulfillment of the law.”



Jesus' answer in the passage concerning the lawfulness of paying taxes to Caesar (Mark 12:13-17) confounds our own

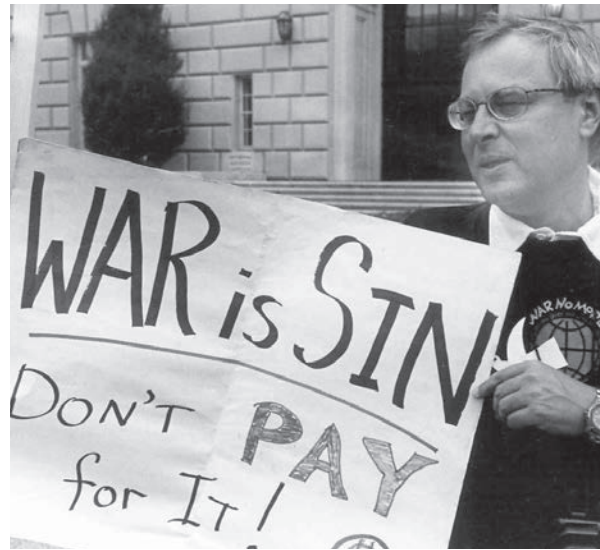
expectations as it did the original witnesses to the encounter. His answer, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's," reminds us to act in accordance with the authority to which we have submitted ourselves. This sometimes results in the need to disobey the laws of our country in our obedience to Divine Law. Moses' mother and sister (Exodus 2:2), the three wise men (Matt 2:12), Peter, Paul, and Jesus himself (Luke 6:1-11) were such "lawbreakers."

Though not the only action one might take, refusal to pay taxes for war can be an essential act of love, a means of preventing the suffering of others.

War Tax Resistance as a Christian Witness

War Tax Resistance—the refusal to pay all or part of one's federal income or excise taxes—is an act of civil disobedience. Following the example of Christ's teachings, we must be willing to accept the consequences of the actions we take out of obedience to the higher law of God. A war tax counselor or lawyer can help you explore the variety of methods and related consequences to find the one that is best for you.

- Refuse to pay a symbolic amount of your income taxes.
- Refuse to pay the military percentage or all of your income taxes.
- Don't file an income tax return.
- Don't pay the federal excise tax on your local telephone bill.
- Include a letter of protest with your income tax return.
- Support passage of a Peace Tax Fund bill in Congress.



Robert Randall at IRS Headquarters, 2005. Photo by Ed Hedemann.

War tax resistance is an act of civil disobedience and should not be undertaken without becoming informed of the possible consequences. Some forms of war tax resistance carry little or no risk, while others involve potential civil and criminal penalties. Often the IRS will only send notices of taxes due. The IRS may also attempt to forcibly collect unpaid taxes. Many war tax resisters are supported in their witness and/or war tax resistance by other people, whether an informal network of friends, members of their church, or a local peace group. Group support can help make such intrusions into one's personal life less threatening as well as an experience of spiritual growth.

Most people feel that war tax resistance is incomplete if it stops with not paying. Using resisted taxes in alternative ways can be important in strengthening human society. Such redirection of taxes is usually done either through outright gifts to churches, service organizations and peace groups, or as loans to alternative and escrow funds. These funds use the pooled tax money of member resisters to make grants or loans to life affirming causes. There are currently about 20 such funds in this country.

A Long Tradition

The early Church saw Caesar's tax for the pagan temple in Rome as a temptation to idolatry. Many refused payment and were severely punished. Under the 4th century Roman Emperor Constantine, Christianity became identified with the State, severely hampering its ability to critique government. It was not until the 16th century that a significant revival of Christian conscience brought the issue of taxes for war into the forefront of some Christians' lives. This was

"Let not the fear of suffering, either in person or property, prevail on any to join with or promote any work or preparation for war."

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends, 1776

particularly true for the Anabaptists and similar groups of persecuted Christians in Central Europe. By standing up for their rights of religious freedom based on biblical and reformation teachings, they paved the way for religious freedom in this country. They held strongly to the principle of the supremacy of the individual conscience when it ran counter to the orders of the state.

The Historic Peace Churches—Quakers, Brethren, and Mennonites—brought the concept of refusal to pay taxes for war to this country in the 16th century and have provided the most apparent examples of war tax refusal.

After World War II, the practice of war tax resistance broadened dramatically from the traditional Anabaptist circles to include members of many other religious traditions, including Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Buddhist, as well as a strong secular involvement. Over the years a number of churches and religious organizations have taken public positions in support of war tax resistance and of members and employees involved in this act of conscience.



Resources

Organizations

Contact groups for their resource lists.

Center on Conscience & War

1830 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009, (202) 483-2220
centeronconscience.org

Mennonite Central Committee

21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501, 1-888-563-4676
mcc.org, search on "war taxes"

National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund

2121 Decatur Place NW, Washington, D.C. 20008
(202)483-3751, 1-888-PEACETAX, peacetaxfund.org

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War Tax Resisters Penalty Fund (WTRPF)

1036 North Niles Ave., South Bend, IN 46617
(574) 532-3720, wtrpf.org

WTRPF provides financial support to resisters who have had money seized with interest and penalties. Even if you are not a war tax resister, you can help those who are.

Books

The Tax Dilemma: Praying for Peace, Paying for War (2006) and ***What Belongs to Caesar? A Discussion on the Christian's Response to Payment of War Taxes*** (2006)

Both by Donald Kaufman and available from Wipf and Stock Publishers, 199 West 8th Ave., Ste 3, Eugene, OR 97401-2960, (541) 344-1528
wipfandstock.com.

American Quaker War Tax Resistance (2011)

Edited by David Gross and available online at createspace.com or amazon.com.

A Persistent Voice: Marian Franz and Conscientious Objection to Military Taxation (2009)

Edited by David Bassett, Steve Ratzlaff and Tim Godshall and available from NWTRCC, nwtrcc.org/store.