

IF YOU WORK
FOR PEACE



STOP PAYING
FOR WAR.

More than a paycheck

NEWS FROM THE WAR TAX RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

October/November 2011

WTR Manifesto

By Larry Rosenwald

A friend of mine named Askold Melnyczuk, a novelist and editor who published an essay I wrote about war tax resistance (WTR), likes to call me “the most dangerous man in Massachusetts.” Which is preposterous as regards me personally. But Askold isn’t talking about me personally; he’s talking about the potential power of war tax resistance, about the danger it might pose to a government depending on taxes to fight wars. And he’s right.

In practice, of course, war tax resistance is not posing such a danger. The American government is conducting three wars, the military budget is incomprehensibly vast and growing, the war system is deeply rooted. How might the gap between potential and accomplishment be bridged?

What follows is a set of ideas about that, but first a personal note. The mode of war tax resistance I’ll be arguing for is similar to the one I do. That’s not because I think my life as a resister is more admirable than the lives of other resisters – quite the contrary, in fact. Mine is protected and luxurious. What’s at issue, though, isn’t the moral value of one political life rather than another; what’s at issue is power, what power a conceivable war tax resistance movement could exert. If there’s a movement we could create that would have greater power than the one I’ve imagined here, then I hope someone will figure out its nature and let us know what it is. I’ll sign up yesterday.

What sort of movement, then, would exert the maximum friction, to use a favorite word of Thoreau’s, against the war machine? First, it would have to be illegal. Second, it would have to be public, which implies that individual resisters would have to accept being penalized for their actions rather than seeking to avoid being penalized. (Levies would have to be badges of honor, like wounds in battle.) Third, it would have to make a clearly stated demand on the American government.

It would have to be illegal because if it’s not illegal it’s ignorable. The illegality – the civil disobedience, to give it its juster and nobler name – is what creates the friction. Which leads me to this reflection: People who do war tax resistance by living below the taxable level are doing something that’s probably in the long run necessary for the survival of the human race on the planet Earth. They are, in Muriel Rukeyser’s words, “Brave, setting up signals across vast

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Buyer Beware

By Marge Piercy

If you subscribe to a magazine about dogs,
It comes full of canine advice and pictures. Woof.
If you buy a winter coat, you can reasonably
count on its being warmer than your bare skin.
If you buy a pig in a poke, it should oink at least.
What do you get when you buy a war?

Trillions of dollars in debt, for one thing.
Every grenade that explodes, ka ching ka ching.
Every ordinance, every vehicle, every plane:
see the smoke rising? That’s money on fire.
That’s your taxes at work. Does it help you?
Is it better than repairing the local bridge

you drive across every commuting morning?
Is it better than putting kids through college
so they aren’t motivated to steal your car?
Is it better than having health insurance
that actually pays your hospital bills entire?
Is it nicer than cleaning up the air you breathe

or equipping miners so they don’t die
by the dozen down there in the smoky dark.
What do you get when you buy a war?
Security? No, the country you invade
Is chock full of people who now hate you.
They’re dying to invade you back.

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More than a paycheck

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

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August Issue Correction

Many of you commented on your appreciation of the Tony Serra transcript in the last issue. The editor, however, made an error in the footnote, confusing civil and criminal issues. It said, "With nonfiling there is no statute of limitations, but for practical reasons, the IRS may not choose to go back beyond 3-5 years," Legal advisor Peter Goldberger sent this correction:

There is no civil statute of limitations for assessment in a nonfiler case. But in context, I think Tony was referring to criminal prosecution (for the misdemeanor of Failure to File). For that, the statute of limitations is six years from the date the return was due. IRC 6531(4). Hence, a criminal indictment is often brought just before six years has elapsed after the return was due for the first year for which they are prosecuting, with a total of six counts for the six years that are not time-barred.

IRS Issues Apology!

In this column in the last issue we wrote about Steve Leeds, who had received a frivolous penalty warning letter after he filed for 2009, did not owe taxes, but included a letter of protest about taxes being used for war. Last month he received a letter from the IRS stating that their notice threatening a \$5,000 fine was in error. Signed by a manager of the Examination Service Center Support at IRS headquarters in DC the letter said: "Although I am unable to comment or address your concerns about the appropriation of tax dollars, I would like to extend an apology on behalf of the Internal Revenue Service for treating your letter of concerns as frivolous." She also promised that he would receive a formal apology from the IRS office in Utah, which deals with so-called frivolous returns. Steve attributes this remarkable apology to the

fact that he wrote his letter of outrage about free speech rights to his Congresspeople and cc'd the IRS and others. The IRS letter of apology notes that they were replying to a letter forwarded from Representative Jackie Speier.

Stay tuned for the day when the IRS apologizes for collecting taxes for war!

Levies and Pre-Tax Deductions

Recently the question came up as to whether pre-tax deductions from a paycheck, such as to pension funds, health care accounts, public transportation programs, etc., would help reduce the amount of a levy. The instructions on an IRS wage levy indicate that deductions would be allowed *if they were in effect before* the levy was received. A levy applies to the net amount after pre-tax deductions; the payee is left with a minimum amount based on their withholding allowances—unless their pay is low enough that it falls under the garnishable level (per the formula or chart on the levy itself).

"Other Taxes" Options

The Tax Policy Center has crunched the numbers to try and figure out how the ranks of American households who are not required to pay income tax will expand or shrink in the coming years based on some different policy options. They project that for 2012, for instance, between 45.7% and 46.3% of households will pay no federal income tax.

David Gross, who blogs about war tax resistance at sniggle.net/Experiment, has been tracking the rising numbers of people who owe no income tax and pondering how to draw them into war tax resistance. His research on excise taxes and other ways that people support war inspired a new page on our website, nwtrcc.org/other_taxes.php. There you will find information about alcohol, tobacco,

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Many Thanks

Welcome to new national affiliate:

Nonviolence International, Washington, DC,
nonviolenceinternational.net

Thanks to the affiliate group below for recent grants and dues payments:

New England War Resisters League

Early fall is a slow time for donations. We'll be getting out an appeal any day and hope that you will be as generous as your pocketbook allows. Thanks!



Network Updates

NWTRCC is in the process of updating the Affiliate, Area Contact, Counselor, and Alternative Fund list and webpage. If you received a yellow postcard and have not yet responded, please contact the office with your confirmation or changes to your listing, nwtrcc@nwtrcc.org or 1-800-269-7464.

We expect to offer a Counselor Training in Rochester, NY, in mid-November. If you are interested in the details, please contact the NWTRCC office. If you would like a training in your area, please call or email the office.

WTR Manifesto

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distances, / considering a nameless way of living, of almost unimagined values.” But they are not exerting friction against the machine. They’re not feeding it; but the machine’s work is not impeded by them.

It would have to be public because only in being public can it command publicity – which was in George Orwell’s view the *sine qua non* for any successful nonviolent movement. Again an uncomfortable reflection: those who do war tax resistance by refusing to pay what they “owe,” then by seeking not to be found and penalized, are people of conscience; they are doing everything in their power to keep their money from being used for the crime of war, they make enormous self-sacrifices. But they cannot, in the nature of what they do, fully speak truth to power; they cannot be fully public.

Finally it would have to be making a clearly defined demand on the government. This for Thoreau’s reason but without his sexism: “Let every man make known what kind of government would command his respect, and that will be one step toward obtaining it.” In the absence of such a demand – quit India, integrate the lunch counters, give us our sons and husbands back – no movement can engage in dialogue with its opponent. The government has a goal: to collect the taxes to fund the wars. The movement – and “movement” is the right word for what I’m trying to imagine here, something less comfortable but more disciplined than a community – needs to have a goal of its own. Without such a goal, we cannot enter into dialogue; for that matter, without such a goal, how would we know if one day we won? (Here, tentatively, is my proposal for such a goal: a 75% reduction in the U.S. military budget and a restriction of American military actions to self-defense in the strictest sense.)

There are, by the usual estimates, 10,000 war tax resisters in the US. What if next year all of us who could make this choice (some of us cannot) chose to make a taxable income, filed a tax return, proclaimed to the IRS and to the public generally why we were refusing to pay part or all of what we owed, proudly publicized every governmental act taken against us?

I think of war the way the War Resisters League does, as a crime against humanity. That crime is getting worse. It’s only because that’s the case that I make these admittedly controversial statements; I want the waging of wars to be slowed. I think we could do more to make that happen. I think we could be more dangerous. ▼

Lawrence Rosenwald is the Anne Pierce Rogers Professor of English at Wellesley College; he has published essays on war tax resistance, pacifism, and Thoreau, and has been a war tax resister since 1987 and an active member of New England War Tax Resistance since the early 1990s.

Buyer Beware

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Shopping is our favorite entertainment. We go to the mall to wander and eyeball stuff. More stuff. We’re stuffed with stuff. But at least you can wear that orange cashmere sweater. You can gobble that pizza. What do you get when you buy a war?

Death. You get death retail and whole sale. You get death by the planeload. You get young death, old death, baby death. You get part death – limbs blown off, heads racked with shrapnel, spines torn apart and brains toasted. You are

delivered hatred by the decadeload. You purchase rape and pillage, you purchase torture and graft, bribery and looting. Your great grandchildren will pay off the debt. Are you happy with your purchase of this war? I’m so sorry. This is not returnable.

Copyright: Marge Piercy, The Crooked Inheritance, Knopf, New York, 2006. Reprinted with permission

In Response

Claire Schaeffer-Duffy —

Two and a half years ago, I made a quick trip to the Pine Bluff Arsenal in southeastern Arkansas to see where the white phosphorous used in the Israel war on Gaza (Dec. 2008-Jan. 2009) was manufactured. Tucked among rolling farmlands, the arsenal was built in 1941 and quickly became one of the region’s biggest employers. According to one local woman, teachers literally “walked out of their classrooms to go make bombs because the pay was so good.”

My Pine Bluff visit came to mind while reading “WTR Manifesto,” a proposal that throws a monkey wrench into the economics of our war-making. Having ten thousand Americans publicly declare they will withhold a portion of their federal taxes until there is a 75% reduction in the U.S. military budget, and a restriction of military actions to self defense in the strictest sense is gutsy, concrete, and perhaps even doable. While I can imagine a lot of heated debate, some of it excruciatingly convoluted, on what qualifies as “self-defense” (for some Americans it includes pre-emptive strikes against suspected or “potential” terrorists), I see the

value of having a goal for a movement of war tax resistance. There is an implied optimism and courtesy in telling the government exactly what you want, and, as Larry notes, goals provide focus to the movement.

Of course, publicly declaring one’s violation of the tax codes escalates the risk of prosecution. The “war wounds” Larry mentions could be much more serious than levies. I foresee the government making examples of some individuals to intimidate others. But risk-taking can build community and more importantly, provides a teachable moment. And this is what I like best about Larry’s proposal. A movement of people publicly engaged in war tax resistance, and paying the consequences for it, would remind Americans that war is not just an inevitable decision in Washington but a product of our making. Knowing this provides the power for taking that product apart.

I don’t think the movement Larry envisions need exclude those, like me, who live in community and earn under the taxable income. Why not add their voices to a public declaration? Although they do not face the same risks as those who earn a taxable

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WTR Ideas and Actions



During the month of April, In Other Words bookstore in Portland, Oregon, hosted a penny poll with a window display set up by the Oregon Community of War Tax Resisters. Local artists Leah Rodgers and Ryan Miller contributed their artwork, and the group set up a penny poll inside the store.

Photo by Kima Garrison.



War tax resister Bill Glassmire (seated, holding front banner between XL and Pipeline) connects the issues at the Tar Sands Action in Washington, DC. Bill was arrested on August 24 during the series of actions in front of the White House from August 20 to September 3. In total 1,252 people were arrested protesting everything related to the extraction of the tar sands oil in Canada and the environmental costs of piping it to the U.S. Bill found it energizing and exciting to be in the midst of this wave of protesters serious about changing government policies – and saving the earth.

Photo by Ben Powless, tarsandsaction on Flickr.com.

BOOK REVIEW

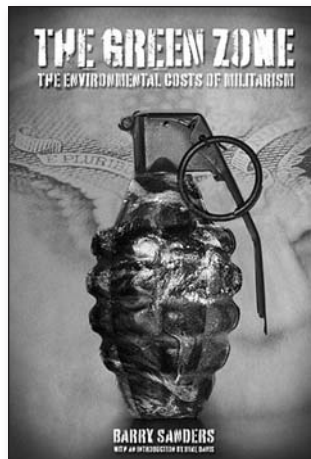
The Green Zone

Review by Clare Hanrahan

From the worker-run collective AK Press – a business without bosses – comes this comprehensive investigative essay by Fulbright scholar and professor Barry Sanders.

The Green Zone: The Environmental Costs of Militarism is packed with horrific statistics of the U.S. military's voracious oil consumption worldwide and the genocidal use of weaponized uranium, particularly in Iraq where it resulted in "the willful eradication of a civilization." Sanders warns in his Introduction: "The earth can no longer absorb the punishment of war." After reading this essay, it will be hard to argue otherwise. The U.S. military, Sanders asserts, is "the largest single polluter of any single agency or organization in the world."

The book borrows its title from the so-called Green Zone, a U.S. military compound in Iraq. Its cover illustration depicts the earth, compressed into the shape of a hand grenade and resting on



the green background of a U.S. Treasury Note, hinting at Sanders' conclusion that we each hold the power to "shut the military down" by grabbing war "where it lives, and dies...at the level of money."

Sanders has excavated information from military manuals, government and anti-government websites, in reference books, exposés, and in an increasing number of leaked memos. Now we have it – or at least a scholarly synopsis of the military assault on the earth. We can't say we didn't know. Are we to remain, as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. aptly described us, as "a society gone mad on war," or shall we each find the courage to withdraw our support? "Resistance may offer the only

course – a resistance to the machine that is killing the environment abroad and in this country as well."

A longer version of this review first appeared in the War Crimes Times, where Clare Hanrahan is a contributing editor. She is also an organizer with the New South Network of War Resisters and a longtime activist with NWTRCC. To order see akpress.org.

New England Gathering November 4-6, 2011

The 26th Annual New England Regional Gathering of War Tax Resisters and Supporters will be held at Pioneer Valley Cohousing in Amherst, Massachusetts.

Ed Hedemann, author of the War Resisters League's book *War Tax Resistance* will kick off the Friday evening session, speaking on this year's Gathering theme, "On Being a War Tax Resister – Public or Private." Ed's talk will focus on the many faces of WTR.

The weekend will also include small and large group discussions, a talent show, delicious meals, and circle dancing. For a brochure, registration, or other information please contact: *Daniel Sicken, PO Box 8011, N. Brattleboro, VT 05304, (802) 387-2798, dhsicken@yahoo.com.*

Letters Welcome

Carlos Steward started his two-year prison sentence in Montgomery, Alabama, in August 2010. There are hopeful signs for him of an early release later this year.

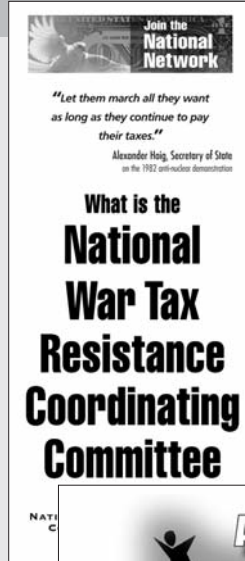
His case has been covered in previous issues, which are posted at nwtrcc.org. See the "NWTRCC News" column for links.

Send letters to:

Carl W. Steward, 09105-088
Federal Prison Camp
Maxwell Air Force Base
Montgomery, AL 36112

Advertising rates for this newsletter can be found at nwtrcc.org/ads.php or contact the editor at 1-800-269-7464.

RESOURCES



“What Is NWTRCC” Redesign

We've updated our basic brochure that describes the history, structure, and services provided by the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee. If you can use some for your literature tabling or to send to friends and relatives, just ask.

New Flyer and Web Pages

“Anarchists and War Tax Resistance” is a new page on our website, nwtrcc.org/anarchists.php, and is also available as a new half-sheet outreach flyer. You can

download the flyer from the web page, or contact the office for a copy.

“Other Taxes” help pay for war, and we've got a new web page, nwtrcc.org/other_taxes.php, with information about them too. Most of our information deals with federal income taxes, although NWTRCC has long promoted resistance of the excise tax on telephone calls and maintains hanguponwar.org for information on that tax. The new “other taxes” page expands the list to cover alcohol and tobacco, tanning salons, highway and airline, estate and gift, and taxes on excess contributions to IRAs. There is also discussion of payroll taxes for Social Security and Medicare and why to avoid over-withholding for salaried employees.

“Five Actions You Can Take Now...without waiting until tax day,” nwtrcc.org/five-actions.php, is another new web page with a self-explanatory title. Check it out and send in your suggestions for what could be a changing list of action ideas. Thanks to Erica Weiland, David Gross, and Ed Hedemann for their parts in getting these new pages researched, written, and online.



Back to School

“Thoreau and his Heirs. The History and Legacy of Thoreau's Civil Disobedience” Teaching Kit, \$30 postpaid. (Includes *Death & Taxes* DVD, Thoreau's essay, questions for students, and select list of historic civil disobedience actions). The kit pieces are also available to download free on our website.



See the NWTRCC website for all of our resources and to order online: nwtrcc.org, click on the Resources button
Call 1-800-269-7464 with questions or for shipping rates on multiple items.

Report from the Office

By Ruth Benn, NWTRCC Coordinator

Page 6 in the *New York Post* is the celebrity gossip page. So today I'm looking at "Page 6" in NWTRCC's newsletter and wondering if I have any news that equals the dating status of Cameron Diaz or Tom Cruise's latest antics. However, I have to admit that learning that the Rwandan president is staying in a \$16,000 per night hotel room while at the UN General Assembly meetings does add some substance to the *Post's* offerings. The comparison to Rwanda's average annual income of \$1,150 might distract the otherwise celebrity-obsessed reader into considering the sad state of the world.

NWTRCC's Page 6 doesn't quite have that caché, but I thought I'd write a little about the doings around here. As many of you may know or guess (given our annual budget of \$35,750) our office is a small room in my home, plus this computer on which I write. In NWTRCC's 29 years (founded in September 1982!) the office has often been in the coordinator's home; in some cases a space in a church or elsewhere was found to be affordable.

In other ways our office is anywhere in the country that a volunteer is doing something to keep this group going, and there are many volunteers tabling, writing articles, updating the website, researching technical issues,

organizing a gathering, etc. My 25-hours per week are taken up with trying to keep the pieces together so we look "organized." I answer or refer inquiries by phone or email, pay bills and bookkeep the finances, get out fund appeals and this newsletter, keep literature up-to-date, promote war tax resistance in whatever ways I or we can think of, etc.

The phone does not ring off the hook, but the calls that come in tend to be longtime resisters dealing with the IRS. I have found in my eight years of working for NWTRCC that the questions have gotten harder over the years, because the IRS has gotten somewhat more efficient, especially in issuing levies and finding nonfilers. Recent calls include a longtime resister trying to decide how to deal with a salary levy; lowering his income is a possibility. A nonfiler is deciding whether to respond to her first-ever letter from the IRS or just expect collection from her Social Security check at some point.

Frivolous penalties are an ongoing problem and the other most frequent topic of callers. I'm grateful to our legal advisor Peter Goldberger for his advice, which comes down to his reassurance that there is not much maneuvering with the IRS on this – even when they are misapplying their own rules. We have updated our webpage, nwtrcc.org/frivolous.php. Please give it a look if you or someone you know has received "frivolous" correspondence from the IRS, and see the counseling note on page 2.

I'm not sure if these tidbits from around the office qualify as gossip, given the enticement of the first paragraph, but I do spend a lot of time sitting here alone at my computer. That's why the gatherings (see ad below) are such a great part of my job. It's always a boost to come together and share stories and ideas and a protest. Just don't expect to be staying in a \$16,000 per night hotel! ▼

Counseling Notes

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airline, tanning salon, highway and gas, and gift and estate excise taxes. The page includes some discussion of Social Security and Medicare taxes, other ways to withdraw support from the government, and links for more information.

Tracking exactly how some of the excise taxes are used is not easy, but even those that pay into trust funds are probably dumped into the general fund, invested in treasury bonds, or similar. Some are easy to resist by not participating in the activity, but if you reach the point of purchase most cannot be resisted. Other excise taxes are paid by the manufacturer before reaching the consumer.

We do not yet have a brochure on this topic, but if you do not use the internet and would like a copy of the text, please contact the NWTRCC office. In addition, your input, corrections, or updates to this page are welcome. ▼

Please join us for the next

War Tax Resistance Gathering

November 4–6, 2011 • First Central Church of the Brethren • 103 N. 13th St., Kansas City, Kansas

- How-to workshops
- Group discussions
- Skills sessions
- Organizing brainstorming
- Good talk, good food, and good fun!

Meet and share stories with war tax resisters from around the country! The gathering starts with dinner on Friday, followed by a program including the Spoken Word Poets Group. Workshop sessions on Saturday cover all facets of war tax resistance. NWTRCC will hold its open business meeting Sunday morning.

There's a busy activist community in Kansas City, and these days much of their organizing efforts are going toward protests at the site of the new Honeywell plant in Kansas City, MO, that will make non-nuclear parts for nuclear weapons. This plant is a key component of the Obama administration's nuclear complex "modernization." Two other plants are part of the plan: a Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement Project at Los Alamos, NM, which is under construction, and a new uranium processing facility in Oak Ridge, TN, is near approval.

Midday Sunday: Protest the new Honeywell nuclear plant just outside Kansas City, MO. Transportation provided.

Contact the NWTRCC office for a brochure or see the schedule and registration form at:
nwtrcc.org/gatheringNov2011.php

WTR Manifesto – Response

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income, there is strength in numbers. The more people spotlighting ways in which Americans can withhold their money from war, the better.

Claire Schaeffer-Duffy is a member of the SS Francis and Therese Catholic Worker, a lay community in Worcester, Massachusetts, that works for peace and justice and offers hospitality to homeless men and women.

Karl Meyer —

“There is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries.”

—Julius Caesar, William Shakespeare

Larry Rosenwald’s proposal sounds reasonable, but I do not see the tide in flood to float even a small number of his ten thousand boats.

In 51 years of unbroken tax refusal I have twice launched my boat into the crest of public tides of protest and resistance, fulfilling the three criteria of Larry’s plan. In August 1966 I wrote the first call to telephone excise tax refusal, sparking a response by several hundred thousand refusers (according to later IRS estimates). In 1968 and 1969 I wrote about how to use the W-4 Form to prevent wage withholding, opening a door for tens of thousands of WTRs in the following years. Our demand was simple and clear: “Bring the troops home now! End the war in Vietnam!” With the draft resisters, we played a significant role in ending that war. And several dozen WTRs went to jail, in my case to serve nine months of a two-year prison sentence.

Again, in the early 1980s, Vietnam era protesters rose up to resist Reagan’s military spending escalations and neo-imperial aggressions in Central America. WTRs had active parts in the Nuclear Freeze and Pledge of Resistance movements; Congress even banned U.S. aid to the “contra” mercenaries attacking Nicaragua. In 1984 I filed 365 daily income tax protest returns to defy a new \$500 civil penalty for “frivolous” protest claims. This action got nationwide publicity, in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, and other mass media, and it provoked IRS penalty assessments totaling \$140,000, but it failed to spark the mass protest movement I hoped for. (The IRS collected only \$1,000 by seizure and sale of my station wagon.)

In the years since, I have not seen outrage rise high enough to transcend peoples’ fears. When I mention war tax refusal in what

passes for a peace movement in Nashville, people look down at the table and hardly respond at all. I’ve learned that we cannot summon the tides of public courage at will. I hope that Larry sees a rising that I cannot yet see.

In the long periods between, we mend our boats, practice right livelihood ourselves, and gather the crews of young radicals who will lead the way when the times mature. We do these things faithfully at Nashville Greenlands, as at many other communities of the Catholic Worker movement.

T.S. Eliot in the *Four Quartets*, speaking of New England fishermen, says, “We have to think of them as forever bailing, / Setting and hauling, while the North East lowers. . . . Not as making a trip that will be unpayable / For a haul that will not bear examination.” If I live to see the tide of resistance come around again, I would launch my boat again, whatever the risk.

Karl Meyer helped create the Nashville Greenlands community in Nashville, Tennessee. His story is included in the book War Tax Resistance.

Bill Glassmire —

Larry Rosenwald proposes that the WTR community engage in illegal and widely publicized tax resistance to make a specific demand of the U.S. government. The proposal comes at a time of opportunity, because all around the country there is a lot of dissatisfaction with our political system. Thank you, Larry, for articulating a possible response.

I can see two ways forward. First is how I understand Larry’s suggestion: individuals in the tax resistance community start right away to implement the proposal however works best for him/her, making public both acts of refusal and responses from the IRS and government. Although likely I would participate, I think this course unlikely to work; in the next paragraph I explain why. Second, the WTR community could spend some time and effort refining the proposal, trying to figure out how to make it work effectively. That effort I think worthwhile, maybe even worthwhile if no action comes of it.

I have been a tax resister for about 20 years. There are tax resisters among my neighbors and friends, but there is no local WTR organization to be part of. For me, what WTR means is that I do not willingly pay my tax liability; in recent years I have also been writing to my congresspeople to tell them that I am not paying. I have not gotten any response. Most often, after a couple of years and several threatening letters, the IRS collects the unpaid tax by a levy on a bank account. From my

experience, I cannot see how individual tax resisters would effectively carry out the proposal. The taxes which I resist, and the letters and the levy with which the IRS responds, are pinpricks. Specifically, I think that the U.S. ruling class, including the national government and the wealthy institutions which support it, could easily ignore whatever publicity I produced about my resisted taxes and the collection procedure.

So, I would be interested in changing and expanding the proposal to ask, how could NWTRCC (and allies) build a community of resistance? Here are a couple of questions to discuss (I am sure that there are others). What would be our goal, both in one year and after three or five or ten years? To take advantage of the public dissatisfaction with our political system, is there any way that the project could address some few of the problems the country faces? How could we effectively publicize the resistance?

What do you think? Should we launch into very public resistance? Or should we try to plan a longterm strategy? Or both? If you like the plan of planning, would you be willing to take part? Let us know at the NWTRCC office.

Thanks for starting this discussion, Larry. And thanks to each of you for your witness.

Bill Glassmire lives in Corvallis, Oregon, with his wife Leslie and two dogs. A tax resister for about twenty years, he is honored to be part of a community including Henry David Thoreau, Ernest Bromley, Wally Nelson, and the readers of this newsletter. ▼

Taking Responsibility

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libraries, educational services, food banks; and organizations that work to obtain basic human rights for all.

I realize that life is too short to cower to power, and that we all have a source of strength within that is way beyond the power others may have over us. Jimi Hendrix said, “When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace.” As a war tax resister I feel able to take steps toward bringing about this day when the world will know peace, which seems to me like an effective form of activism. The more I take personal responsibility for the world I live in and see everything as connected, the more I am able to live what feels true to me. I hope to see the day when a more just government structure will eliminate the need for war tax resistance, but until then I am thankful for this community of people and this opportunity to live what I believe. ▼

Taking Responsibility

By Lauren Tepper

"I believe that we must consciously develop a greater sense of Universal Responsibility. We must learn to work not just for our own individual self, family, or nation, but for the benefit of all humankind."

—H.H. the XIVth Dalai Lama

"A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both."

—Dwight Eisenhower

When I first began war tax resistance, it was not something I wanted to do. It felt like, as Julia Butterfly Hill has called it, a "choiceless choice." Given my abhorrence of war, I could not justify paying for it with my tax dollars. I had felt this way for years, but it seemed futile for me alone to take a stand. I dreamed of organizing a movement, a group of people who would resist paying taxes in solidarity. When I learned several years ago that there actually was such a group (and had been all along, unbeknownst to me!) I joined up right away. But it still felt more like a moral obligation than something I was eager to do.

It took a lot of soul searching for me to take the plunge. My carefully amassed (though relatively meager) life savings and my up until now perfect credit rating gave me the illusion of security, and I was reluctant to let it go.

Since then, war tax resistance has become part of my spiritual practice and has helped me strengthen my character as well as being able to live more in alignment with my ideals. Letting go has been one of the big spiritual lessons of war tax resistance for me. I think about how being a war tax resister will impact my life as I age, in the event that I want to own things like a home or a car which I presently do not. But, life being as uncertain as it is, war tax resistance is a great reminder to stay in the moment as much as I can. It seems that things unfold in a miraculous way when I let go of my controlling nature and let them flow.

Another spiritual benefit of war tax resistance for me is that it helps me cultivate the courage and selflessness to stand up to authority and do what I feel is right, regardless of the personal consequences for me. Since I am relatively new at this and have taken steps to consciously reduce my income, I have not had to face any consequences as of yet, other than the intimidating warning

letters from the IRS. Rather than dreading and fearing this process as I did in the beginning, I am now beginning to welcome it as an important part of my spiritual growth.

As a freelance yoga instructor, personal trainer, and writer, things I do to reduce my income include working on exchange instead of for money, and simply taking on less work when I can afford it. This gives me the added benefit of more free time to enjoy life's simple and inexpensive pleasures!

War tax resistance has also connected me with a wonderful assortment of colorful and courageous individuals through NWTRCC. Although the NYC contingent, from my limited experience, seems to be a group of radical individualists (which I love!) with busy schedules so we don't get together all too frequently, it is always a breath of fresh air to connect with this community. I am inspired by everyone who does this along with me, and especially motivated to continue by the presence of longstanding resisters in my community, who practice with endless patience, tirelessness, selflessness, and good humor.

I pay my state taxes (not that I care to support state corruption either, but I don't find it



Photo by Alan Tepper.

as abhorrent as the U.S. military machine, and as they say sometimes we have to 'choose our battles'). Since I am self-employed, I file my federal taxes as usual but withhold 50% of what I owe, as this is approximately the amount that goes to the military. I send my return with a letter explaining why I am not paying the full amount. I redirect the money as I feel our tax dollars should be used: to support environmental protection; social services like

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