

More Than a Paycheck REFUSING to PAY for WAR



35 Years of Resistance

Resistance in Public: Tax Day 2018

By Erica Leigh

Calling for an end to endless war and for funding for people and planet, thousands of people across the United States took action this tax season. From Maine to Los Angeles, featuring war tax redirections, bake sales, marching bands, street theater, and “Burma shave” sign displays during rush hour, participants took their message to the public, the IRS, and the offices of elected officials.

Although tax resistance didn’t resonate as strongly with the media this year as it did in 2017, groups of war tax resisters and supporters, as well as individual resisters, took action around the country.

In addition, when the U.S. military conducted airstrikes in Syria on April 14, this latest act in the ongoing U.S. military engagement in Syria raised the profile of anti-war activism, including many local rallies against the airstrikes.

Below are some stories from Tax Day actions reported to NWTRCC. To read every report in full, go to nwtrcc.org/programs-events/tax-day/tax-day-reports-2018.

Austin, Texas

On Sunday afternoon, April 15, we held a long poster banner reading, “I’d rather buy ___ than war!” on a pedestrian bridge downtown where many folks walk or bike. We offered markers to passersby and invited them to write in the blank, and many did. It was a positive, interactive event, and we really appreciated the responses, most of which centered on education, health care, food, pets and the environment. A favorite moment was when a couple walked by saying that, just a few minutes before, they had become engaged. We cheered, and they wrote “our wedding” on the banner.

— Susan Van Haitsma



In Austin, passersby add their opinions to a banner about how war dollars should be spent. Photo by Susan Van Haitsma.

Chico, California

For the past few years we have combined the Penny Poll and War Resister League flyers to our Post Office leafleting. Before last year there was no problem at the busiest post office but now it has become a real exercise in defending our first amendment rights. The police have been called both times and the post office has failed to have us arrested but the presence of police and their arrogant and bullying ways has been a challenge. One good note though is that one officer said to me on the side, “Thank you for being so determined to support the Constitution.” We believe strongly that we can’t release our right to offer information to the public as we always have in the past (and I’ve been at this post office for probably 35 years on tax day)...

(The problem this year started when an irate post office customer did not like the content of the War Resisters League Pie Chart leaflet and complained to the post-master... it had nothing to do with our behavior or where we were standing.)

— Chris Nelson

Kingston, New York

A noontime event was held on tax day outside of Congressman John Faso’s Kingston office at 721

“To Hell With Liberty Bonds”

By David Gross

The United States funded its participation in World War I by selling “Liberty Bonds” to Americans. The primary tactic of war tax resisters in the U.S. at that time was to refuse to buy these bonds, but the government and vigilante groups frequently used coercive tactics to try to force people into purchases or to retaliate against people who had not contributed. A signature tactic of these vigilante groups was to paint the vehicles, homes, businesses, and bodies of “bond slackers” yellow. To commemorate these resisters, NWTRCC is printing our newsletter on yellow paper throughout 2018.

The violence directed against “bond slackers” increased through the Spring of 1918. In June, preacher Billy Sunday told a crowd of thousands that he would shoot “like traitors” anyone who discouraged people from buying Liberty Bonds. Henry Lattell was hospitalized with life-threatening injuries from being beaten after being accused of saying “to hell with Liberty bonds; I won’t buy any.”

The mayor of Wamego, Kansas explained to a reporter why they were resorting to violent coercion to force bond purchases: “Until recently we have tried to argue with the slackers and Huns... Never again.

continued on page 7 ↻

continued on page 5 ↻

More Than a Paycheck REFUSING to PAY for WAR

Editor Erica Leigh

Production Rick Bickhart

Printing and Mailing

Lakeside Printing Cooperative
Madison, Wisconsin

Printed on Recycled Paper

More Than a Paycheck: Refusing to Pay for War is a bimonthly publication of the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee, a clearing-house and resource center for the conscientious war tax resistance movement in the United States. NWTRCC is a coalition of local, regional and national affiliate groups working on war tax related issues.

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.

Subscriptions are \$15 per year.

NWTRCC

P.O. Box 5616, Milwaukee, WI 53205

(262) 399.8217 • (800) 269.7464

nwtrcc@nwtrcc.org

SOCIAL MEDIA: socialmedia@nwtrcc.org

NEWSLETTER: wartaxresister@nwtrcc.org

www.nwtrcc.org



Counseling Notes

Private Debt Collectors

At the NWTRCC conference in May, we found that a second war tax resister had received a notice from the IRS that their account had been assigned to a private collection agency. As stated in a previous issue, if you are assigned to a private debt collector, the IRS sends a letter with the name of the company assigned your debt. The private company will then follow up with a first notice. The IRS notice states that the private debt collection agency is prohibited from "threatening or intimidating taxpayers." The notice also states that you can have the debt collection agency taken off your case by submitting this request "in writing to the private collection agency." Lastly, the letter notes that these private agencies "cannot take any type of enforcement action against you to collect this debt (such as filing a notice of Federal Tax Lien or using a levy)." Keep us posted with any such news and stories of "what happened next."

When Do I Need a Lawyer?

In the process of moving the NWTRCC office to Milwaukee, I (Lincoln) had a chat with our legal advisor, Peter Goldberger. It was more of an informal, get to you know you better chat. But he shared a piece of advice I thought I would pass along. Many WTR folks are used to getting letters from the IRS stating what has not been paid. This may include having a revenue officer assigned to one's case or having one's case turned over to a collection agency. All these actions pertain to the fiscal side of the WTR, and Peter is not as concerned about those matters. He would recommend getting in touch with a lawyer if you are assigned a "special agent" or served a summons. These latter two actions pertain to criminal proceedings. As always, please contact NWTRCC anytime you have concerns about contact you received from the IRS, but especially in the case of a summons or special agent. If a lawyer is needed, we will help you contact someone in your area or Peter Goldberger in special cases. No criminal cases — or serious cases — have come up recently.

Counseling in Spanish

Most WTR counselors are not fluent in Spanish. Nevertheless, if you receive a call or e-mail from someone who only speaks Spanish or would benefit from counseling in Spanish, Daniel Woodham (now of Kingston, New York) has graciously volunteered to share his Spanish-speaking talent with the rest of NWTRCC. He can be reached at (207) 478-6723 or danielwoodham@hotmail.com. Please let him know in advance if you will be sending an inquiry his way. If he is not available, contact the NWTRCC office, as we have a couple other folks who are willing to fill in as necessary. If anyone else feels comfortable counseling in Spanish, please alert the NWTRCC office so we can add you to our resource list. •

Many Thanks

We are grateful to everyone who has responded or will respond to our coordinator transition appeal and May fund appeal with a donation of any size. Thank you!

Special thanks to the **Kathy Yoselson Fierce Determination Fund**, **Community Foundation of Tompkins County (NY)** for a grant of \$1,000!

Don't forget, you can find us on
Facebook • Twitter • YouTube • Instagram
and join our discussion listserv • Click on the icons at nwtrcc.org

Network Updates

The Network List of Affiliates, Area Contacts, Counselors, and Alternative Funds is updated and online at nwtrcc.org, or contact the NWTRCC office (nwtrcc@nwtrcc.org or 1-800-269-7464), if you would like a printed list by mail.

Speaking to Young People

by The Rev. Thad Bennett, Conway, MA

One of the wonderful things about being a war tax resister for the last 30+ years and being an Episcopal priest is that I get to tell people about my tax resistance in lots of different ways. So, when I mentioned it in a sermon a teacher at the Hilltop Montessori School in Brattleboro, VT invited me to come speak to his class of 7th and 8th graders. He wrote, in preparation for the class:

The students have read "Civil Disobedience". We had the most remarkable two hour conversation about the essay. The students focused particularly on personal responsibility and the judgments of right and wrong. They have also read "Where your income tax really goes" and I asked them to peruse two war resister web sites.

I spent about 15 minutes talking about my own "why" and "how" of doing tax resistance and then off we went with their questions. They were amazing...so curious and uninhibited. The best part was at the end and I asked them "What is the one take-away you have from this session?" Here are some of their responses:

"The most important things I took from Thad's visit were:

- 1) that the IRS cares more about money than people and
- 2) Stand up for what is right but know the consequences."

– Owen James

"Thad taught me that I should think about everything I do, and learn the ramifications of it. Thad learned that he was praying for peace, while paying for war. He knows that by withholding his war tax he is not making world peace. Neither is my clothing collection ending the war in Syria. We both know we're doing what we can for what we believe in....." – Julia

"I think the biggest thing I took away from Thad's visit is that if you say you disapprove of something, you should work to change it. I admire Thad's bravery in the fact that supporting the killing of another human being is something he does not believe in, so he makes a quiet statement in resisting the paying of war taxes. In other words, he does not lend himself to the evil which he condemns." – Siri

"Every action has its consequences and you must be willing to take that consequence if you commit to the action. Thad said that he was fully aware of what his actions could bring upon him and thought that the benefits would be much higher than the consequences." – Huxley

Poor People's Campaign Report

Anne Barron, a member of the Peace Resource Center of San Diego (a NWTRCC affiliate), has been organizing with the Poor People's Campaign (PPC). The PPC kicked off its national campaign, 40 Days of Moral Action, on May 14, with rallies and direct actions around the country centered on the needs of women, children, and people with disabilities. May 29's action is focused on the war economy. Check out Anne's blog post on the May 14 events in Sacramento, California and subsequent reports at prcsd.org.

Upcoming Events

We keep a list of upcoming events that are ripe for war tax resistance outreach, especially a workshop, speech, or panel appearance. (We can also help with literature for tabling or leafleting, at low or no cost.) Get in touch with the office if you'd like to represent NWTRCC at another organization's event, or have a connection we could use! Below are a few big upcoming events you might be attending already. Check out the complete event list: tiny.cc/nwtrcc

Fellowship of Reconciliation Conference, June 30 - July 3,

Seabeck, Washington: This year's theme is "Complicating Narratives." forseabeck.org

Veterans for Peace National Convention, Aug 23-26, St. Paul,

Minnesota: This year's theme is Reclaim Armistice Day, 1918-2018: End All Wars. veteransforpeace.org

Women's March on the Pentagon, Oct 20-21, Washington, D.C.:

Organizers say: "No woman is free while the U.S. spends trillions of dollars bombing millions and occupying over 150 countries around the world." marchonpentagon.com

SOA Watch Border Encuentro, Nov 16-18, Nogales, Arizona and

Nogales, Sonora, Mexico: The third annual convergence at the militarized border of the U.S. and Mexico. NWTRCC has typically had a presence at SOAW events! Please let us know if you plan to attend or want to help run a workshop. soaw.org/border

Save The Date:

Colrain After 25 Years

Twenty-five years ago, hundreds of people flocked to Colrain, Massachusetts to voice their opposition to war and military spending by supporting the war tax resistance of the Corner-Kehler household. This year's New England war tax resistance gathering invites as many of these participants as possible (and interested others) to gather at the Woolman Hill Retreat Center in Deerfield, Massachusetts, November 16-18, 2018, to revisit that experience. Stay tuned for details! ●

Sunshine and Community in Los Angeles

By Erica Leigh

We had a delightful NWTRCC gathering in sunny Los Angeles May 4-6. I want to start with a HUGE thank you to the local organizing team, including Cathy Deppe, Alex Walker, and Anne Barron from Southern California War Tax Resistance and Alternative Fund (sorry if I missed other names). The gathering was co-sponsored by Veterans For Peace LA Chapter, LA Catholic Worker, and NWTRCC, and held at the LA Workers Center in Koreatown. In addition, LA Food Not Bombs provided food throughout the weekend! Thank you to all our hosts and supporters.

The weekend began with dinner and a panel discussion on divestment, which was well attended by locals from outside the NWTRCC network. Panelists Jim Haber, Anne Barron, Dr. Melina Abdullah, and Paula Kahn discussed divesting from Israeli occupation, war, and police, as well as working to end sexual violence. Paula called in from work she's doing with migrants in Tijuana, but unfortunately, our connection did not last very long. You can watch the main part of the panel presentation on YouTube at bit.ly/DivestPanel18.



Divest from War, Invest in People panelists (l-r) – Anne Barron, Jim Haber, and Dr. Melina Abdullah. Photo by Erica Leigh.



The audience for Friday night's panel included many Los Angeles locals alongside the NWTRCC regulars. Photo by Anne Barron.

On Saturday, we had a chat with Ruth and Lincoln about our big coordinator transition! Ruth wrapped up her coordinator work in late May, and Lincoln's first official day was May 4, the first day of the gathering. See Lincoln's piece in this newsletter for more details about the coordinator shift, and watch the coordinator session online at bit.ly/NWTRCCoord.

We had a great War Tax Resistance 101 workshop, with eight people in attendance! It's so great to see people plugging in.

After that, David Gross presented on Quaker war tax resistance, while war tax resisters Lauren von Bernuth and Orane Sharpe of Citizen Truth (citizentruth.org) spoke about their media work. (Last year, they did a great "couch talk" about war tax resistance — check it out on YouTube at bit.ly/WTRcouchtalk.) I also spoke briefly about the social media landscape as it relates specifically to NWTRCC. Watch this session online at bit.ly/creatingmedia.

To close out the day, representatives from the Poor Peoples' Campaign in Los Angeles, as well as two Catholic Workers from our network, spoke about their work for racial, economic, and social justice. This session is also available to watch at bit.ly/PPCandCW.

In the evening, many of us went to the Cinco de Mayo celebration at the El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, enjoying the music and the night market.

NWTRCC's Sunday business meeting featured a new element — a go-around where each person had a moment to share some thoughts about the ideas discussed the day before. We also did consultant reports, including Ruth's last consultant report (☹️) and Sarah's first consultant report (😊). Our finances are in good shape. We reviewed objectives and fundraising work, and debated an affiliate support proposal from Maine WTR Resource Center — deciding to finalize our application form and solicit more proposals before awarding any money this year. We welcomed DeCourcy Squire and Samantha Leuschner to the Ad Comm, and said thanks to outgoing Ad Comm members Coleman Smith and Bill Glassmire. The CC said yes to endorsing the efforts against Trump's military parade in Washington, D.C. this Armistice Day, and yes to endorsing the Women's March on the Pentagon (although

continued on next page ↻



View of the Arlington West exhibit. Photo by Ruth Benn.

the latter will still be coming to the NWTRCC network for a full review before final approval).

After this weekend, a few things are on my mind. War tax resistance is increasingly something that people take on without a local supportive community or group, making our gatherings doubly valuable. During our meeting evaluations, it was noted just how much we might be able to accomplish if we all lived in the same town!

I see some great shifts going on across our network in the ways we address social justice. I hope that we will continue to do that work together! I'm working on a blog post about *intersectionality* and what it means for war tax resisters wanting to work with other groups for a peaceful and just world, free from racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and other forms of bigotry and oppression.

See more photos and thoughts from the weekend at nwtrcc.org/media/blog. ●



We remembered to get everyone together for a group photo on Sunday.

Liberty Bonds continued from page 1

Everybody in this neighborhood is going to be an American or ostensibly an American sympathizer. We can't hope to change the heart of the Hun but we can and will change his actions and his words." ●

David Gross, author of 99 Tactics of Successful Tax Resistance Campaigns among other books, will be adding historical notes in this column through the year. For more you can also see his blog at sniggle.net/TPL.

Profile continued from page 8

to make it local, where smaller amounts can have more impact. "Think global, act local" isn't just a snappy slogan. Acting at all can seem overwhelming—so many choices, so many ways to get involved, have a voice, make a difference. So many places that need money. In some areas, tax resisters are pooling their diverted tax money and giving large sums to national groups for broader impact. Narrowing the choice to my local community made sense to me. It feels like real direct action.

This year, again I'm filling out tax forms for my own record-keeping, but also to have a ready accounting of the numbers should the IRS come calling—and especially to know exactly how much I have to reallocate—it feels like the only possible course of action. I'm still falling off the cliff, just like the perpetually falling ad man in the "Mad Men" opening credits, but it's somewhat less scary.

While I believe the IRS is so overwhelmed, backed up, understaffed, underfunded, and poorly organized that it won't notice little old me, I can't count on it. So far I've heard nothing from the IRS and I still have my state-subsidized health insurance past the annual renewal date. They may never catch up with me, or I could get a letter in the mail next week.

In the meantime, one thing I've learned is that it's important for me to look at it not as *I'm not paying my share of taxes*, but *I'm diverting my tax money*. It's important to remember, and to point out to others, that I'm not keeping the money for myself. But instead of paying it to the government with the now unrealistic expectation that they'll do what they're supposed to and use it for the betterment of society, I'm giving it directly to organizations in my local community knowing that

the money actually will make a positive difference in people's lives. That helps to alleviate any dread I might have over a possible run-in with the IRS and makes it much easier to write the checks.

This is the letter I sent with my donations:

Dear Kind Folks,

In the spirit of Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience" and in solidarity with the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee (nwtrcc.org), as an act of resistance against a corrupt, dysfunctional government that refuses to meet the needs of its citizens, I have not paid income tax or filed income tax forms. Instead, as many war tax resisters do, I am redirecting the funds I put aside for taxes to organizations that help people in my local community—organizations that a functional, caring government would be funding instead of the military industrial complex.

This is an act of conscience that comes with some personal risk, but I feel, as anyone who engages in nonviolent action against a corrupt government feels, that the potential benefits to society outweigh any risk I might face. While many people around the country are showing their resistance by marching in the streets, or making phone calls and writing letters to their elected representatives, or meeting in groups to educate and motivate, I've chosen a quieter form of resistance that, I hope, will directly help people right here in my community.

Most sincerely,
Ilene Roizman ●

Happy to be Here!

By Lincoln Rice

In case you have not heard, I took on the role of the new NWTRCC coordinator at the May 2018 NWTRCC conference in Los Angeles. I am very thankful for the work that Ruth has done the past fifteen years. For the first time in NWTRCC's history, a new coordinator is joining other paid consultants: Communications Consultant Erica Leigh and our Social Media Consultant Sarah Mueller. I look forward to working with Erica and Sarah, who do so much to communicate the resources of NWTRCC in a relevant and accessible manner.

For this issue of More Than a Paycheck, I thought I would share some background about myself. I was born and raised in Green Bay, Wisconsin, but moved to Milwaukee for college in 1995 and have lived there ever since. In the summer of 1998, I joined the Milwaukee Catholic Worker, which was home to a number of war tax resisters. They shared their resistance stories with me as well as their NWTRCC literature. Inspired by their example, I sent a letter with my 1040 form instead of a check on April 15, 1999, and was also arrested for the very first time in front of the IRS office in Milwaukee.

I attended my first NWTRCC meeting in November 1999. The US had recently played a large role in the bombing of Kosovo and harsh economic sanctions against Iraq were in full force. At that meeting I was inspired and informed by WTR folks from across the country. All this confirmed the rightness of the resistance I had already undertaken, and provided tools and a support network for my continued resistance.

A few years later, I was invited to apply for a spot on the Administrative Committee. I served a term on AdComm beginning at the November 2003 meeting. During this time, I got to know the regular conference

attendees and learn about local situations across the network. My time on AdComm included the 2005 National Strategy Conference in Brooklyn, where I had the honor of meeting Juanita Nelson.

After my time on AdComm, I was still involved with NWTRCC, but in a more limited capacity. I served on the committee that produced the "Death & Taxes" DVD and provided content/input on numerous NWTRCC publications. I also went to Marquette University and earned my PhD in Catholic moral theology, with special focus on Catholic Worker thought and racial justice. I even published a book, *Healing the Racial Divide: A Catholic Racial Justice Framework Inspired by Dr. Arthur Falls* (2014). I confess that I only began to take the intransigence of racism in American society more seriously the last few years. So I am very pleased the NWTRCC has also become more intentional in exploring the issue of racism and that so many groups have made it a part of their redirection.

Early this year, I applied for the coordinator position and accepted the position in March. After the May 2018 conference in Los Angeles, I spent a few days in Brooklyn, learning the ropes from Ruth (though I still have plenty to learn). And since then I have been getting the Milwaukee office in order. As you will see in this newsletter and with NWTRCC's online info, we have a new PO Box in Milwaukee and a new local phone number to call. The 800 number and the e-mail address to contact the NWTRCC office are still the same. And I suppose that is as good a metaphor as any to say that some things will be different and some things will stay the same. There are core values of NWTRCC, which will stay the same. But some of the ways in which the message is communicated and passed on have changed and will continue to change. And I think that a good thing. ●



Lincoln helps haul the crosses marking veteran and civilian deaths at Arlington West in Santa Monica. Photo by Ruth Benn.



During a NWTRCC gathering session about the coordinator transition, Lincoln jokingly announces his "10 point plan to overhaul NWTRCC." Photo by Erica Leigh.



Tin Horn Uprising band at the Tax Day rally in Kingston, NY.
Photo by Daniel Woodham.

Broadway in Kingston. Approximately 40 people braved the cool, breezy and slightly damp sidewalk telling Congressman Faso’s environs that people want to “Cut War Spending and Fund Human Needs”...

Members of Rise Up Hudson Valley, Citizen Action Kingston, and musicians from Tin Horn Uprising joined others that came in support to sing songs such as Wade in the Water, Get Up Stand Up and We Shall Overcome... Copies of War Resisters League “Pie Chart” were distributed showing that almost 1/2 our federal tax dollar pays for war. So the gathered crowd got to share in the Apple Pie from which each person got a VERY SMALL piece while the Pentagon got the vast lion’s share. And though the staff at Congressman Faso’s office declined accepting our “gift” of the 1/2 Pie (Pentagon’s Slice), we were able to pass along a few pie charts and ask that next time the Congressman NOT vote for an additional \$70 billion in defense authorizations that were not even requested. Instead of sending more tomahawk missiles at a cost of \$1.4 million each to threaten global warfare, as we did with 66 such missiles in Syria [on April 14], we would rather have that money spent to better our schools, health care system and housing and job programs for Americans that need help.

— Daniel Woodham

Maine

There was tabling, leafleting, presentations and outreach in towns and cities around the state. This year we had a calendar listing in the M, the Portland Press Herald’s entertainment insert. WBFY of Belfast interviewed Alan Clemence. Channels 8 and 13 expressed interest and then did not appear. We had great coverage by Channel 5 in Portland. Morgana Warner-Evans entered all of our events on various media calendars throughout the state. The hope this year is to call some of the major outlets and ask them what we have to do to get a feature.

— Ginny Schneider, Maine WTR Resource Center

Redirections

The **Conscience and Military Tax Campaign (CMTCC) escrow account** made four \$1,000 grants this spring, and will likely make two more \$1,000 grants later this year. The recipients are: Leonard Education



Carol Van Hooten staffed a penny poll at Eugene’s Tax March on April 15, 2018.
Photo by Jain Elliott.

Organization (for a college scholarship for Yazan Meqbil, a Palestinian student who lives in Gaza), Vietnam Peace Commemorative Committee (for its 50 Anniversary of My Lai events and work around the 50th Anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Poor People’s Campaign), Jewish Voice for Peace (for its “Deadly Exchange Campaign”, a national initiative to end US/Israeli police exchange programs), and Concerned Citizens of Tillery (for its citizen’s campaign to challenge Halifax County Commissioners and the NC Department of Public Safety agreement to use land adjacent to their community as a training landing strip for the Osprey Airplane).

The **Northern California People’s Life Fund** gave away a record \$65,000 this year, mostly in grants of \$2,500, to: Anti Police-Terror Project (ATP) – Affect Real Change, Art Forces, Center for Political Education – National Lawyers Guild, Central Americans For Empowerment (CAFE) at UCB, Community Defense Network (CDN), Critical Resistance (CR) Oakland, Culture Keepers – Mentoring Center, East Oakland Collective – Social Good Fund, GABRIELA Oakland, International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network (IJAN), Lead to Life – Planting Justice, LAGAI Queer Insurrection, Metta Center for Nonviolence, and 13 more groups, too many to list here!

New England War Tax Resistance (NEWTR) donated \$6,900 from resisted taxes to local organizations working for a just and peaceful world: Asian American Resource Workshop, Beantown Society, Boston Mobilization, Dorchester People for Peace, Maine WTR Resource Center, Men Teach-New England, Reclaim Roxbury, Student Immigration Movement, The Youth Justice and Power Union, and Traprock Center for Peace and Justice. Mary Regan announced these grants at the Boston Tax Day rally.

At the May NWTRCC gathering, the **Southern California War Tax Resistance (SCWTR) Alternative Fund** made donations to each of the groups who generously supported the gathering: Food Not Bombs LA – Tanya Selig and Stephanie Arriola, Jewish Voice For Peace, LA Catholic Worker, Citizen Truth, Veterans for Peace – LA, Black Lives Matter – LA, Code Pink – LA, Poor Peoples Campaign – LA, and NWTRCC. SCWTR will make their regular annual grants in the fall. ●



NATIONAL WAR TAX RESISTANCE COORDINATING COMMITTEE

P.O. Box 5616, Milwaukee, WI 53205
(800) 269-7464 · (262) 399-8217
www.nwtrcc.org

Please Note:

If there is a red circle around your address label, this is the last issue of *More Than a Paycheck* on your subscription. Send in a renewal ASAP!

PROFILE

Breaking from Compliance

By Ilene Roizman

A year ago, committing to tax resistance felt like jumping off a cliff. There had been a three-year period a few years prior when circumstances allowed me to work so little I wasn't required to file, and I didn't, without any hesitation. So when it came time to make not filing a deliberate act of civil disobedience, I had already gotten over the hurdle of breaking from decades of compliance. Still, it wasn't an easy decision to make.

Working as a freelancer means no tax withholding. I'm supposed to put the money aside and actually write a check to the IRS every year. Two years ago, coming off the no-work period, there wasn't much to send, but if I hadn't, I wouldn't have been able to get state-subsidized health insurance. Last year, I couldn't bring myself to write the check. Instead, I saw an opportunity to join the resistance.

In my case, the stakes are low—I have no car, no house, no real assets to speak of—as is my income. Since I'm generally healthy, I'm not terrified by the prospect of losing health insurance, which is supposed to be



Ilene Roizman with her backyard apple tree.
Photo by Ilene Roizman.

verified for requalification on my state tax return, which I'm also not filing.

For advice, I turned to a dear friend, an activist from way back who lived in a tepee after coming back from Vietnam, went around counter-recruiting with Veterans for Peace at high schools to convince potential military recruits not to believe the government's lies about the glory of the armed forces, and was arrested with a group of protesters at a nuclear power plant. He knows a thing or two about resistance. He also knows about the War Resisters League, and consequently about war tax

resistance, and that led me to the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee.

I read pretty much everything on the NWTRCC website, had e-mail exchanges with a few people, and talked to a local long-time tax resister on the phone. I scrutinized "Civil Disobedience" and read works by Gene Sharp, as recommended by my activist son in NYC. I covered a lot of ground in a short period of time and decided there was no turning back.

When it came to what to do with the set-aside funds, it felt important