



More than a paycheck

NEWS FROM THE WAR TAX RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

February 2009

Reflections on Gaza Renewing the War Tax Boycott

by Ruth Benn



Today I got out the notebooks and photos from my first trip to Palestine and Israel in 1988 at the time of the first *intifada*. I was on a human rights tour with the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. The goal was to show U.S. activists the view from occupation and for us to bring that information back home.

With Gaza under attack, that trip has been on my mind. In particular I wanted to look up my notes from a meeting with a lawyer (a young man then, but is he still alive?) at the Gaza Lawyers Association whose words led me to increase my war tax resistance.

"Watch your taxes. Don't kill the kids. Don't participate in this."

His three simple phrases ring all too true today. U.S. aid to Israel, along with all kinds of loans and weapons deals, allows the occupation to continue. I was truly horrified at seeing firsthand a military occupation and to get a taste of the daily humiliations that are an aspect of controlling a population. On a few occasions our group was also the target of stones thrown by Palestinian young people who saw us as the enemy.

Sometimes it seems that the cycle of violence has cycled around so many times that it might be impossible to find the way out. I

just want to shout at all the soldiers and fighters, "STOP IT."

But there is always more to the story, and the U.S. desperation for a toe-hold in the Middle East is a powerful factor behind the intractable appearance of this conflict. When I came home after that trip in '88 I changed my W-4 in order to stop paying 100% of my federal income taxes. Up to that point I had been refusing a percentage of whatever was due, but I could no longer stomach supporting militarism by writing a check of any size to the U.S. government.

At the same time, I became more diligent at redirecting refused tax dollars to help victims of war, people working for peace, and other programs that serve humanity. Mine is such a small contribution given all the desperate needs around the world, but it is my way of shouting for change.

Does the government hear me? I think so,

but they don't like to talk about tax resistance because they don't want more people to realize they can choose how their money is spent. And, it takes more than our separate voices to really force a change in priorities at the highest levels.

Whether your resistance, or consideration of war tax resistance, has been motivated by violence in the Middle East, Latin America, Africa, Southeast Asia, or the lack of services here at home while the government builds more weapons, I hope that we can amplify our shouts through the 2009 War Tax Boycott and redirection. The longer the list of public signers to the Boycott, the louder that shout becomes.

Take a moment to go online and sign on now, or send in the enclosed form. While you're at it, why not ask the group you work with to become a sponsor of the Boycott and promote it to their membership? ▼



Graffiti on a wall in Jerusalem, 1992. Photo by Ruth Benn.

IF YOU WORK FOR PEACE



More than a paycheck

Editor

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Production

Rick Bickhart

Printing

Lakeside Printing Cooperative

Printed on Recycled Paper

More Than a Paycheck is a bimonthly publication of the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee, a clearinghouse 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 to *More Than a Paycheck* are \$15 per year.

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Taxable Income Levels

NWTRCC offers the standard deductions/personal exemption chart as a guide for people who choose to live below the taxable income. IRS standard deduction and exemption amounts are adjusted annually for cost-of-living increases.

To figure out how much you can earn in 2009 before owing income taxes, identify your category and multiply the personal exemption by the number of dependents you can claim, including yourself, then add your standard deduction. For example, if you are married and filing jointly, with two children, you would add \$14,600 (\$3,650 x 4) to \$11,400, equaling a taxable level of \$26,000. Below this amount your family would owe no income taxes for the year, although the filing requirements set the bar much lower because of social security taxes.

2009 IRS Deductions and Exemptions

Category	Standard Deduction	Personal Exemption
Single	\$5,700	\$3,650
Married, filing jointly	\$11,400	\$3,650
Married, filing separately	\$5,700	\$3,650
Head of household	\$8,350	\$3,650

An additional \$1,050 standard deduction may be claimed by a married taxpayer who is at least 65 years old or blind. If the taxpayer is single, the additional standard deduction amount is \$1,400.

NWTRCC's Practical #5, "Low Income/Simple Living as War Tax Resistance" (\$1 from the NWTRCC office), also includes information on legal ways to reduce taxable income and owe no federal income taxes. You may be able to make significantly more than the amounts indicated above but would need to file to keep it legal.

Exempt from Levy

A common counseling question is "how much will be left if my salary is levied?"

The IRS has a handy chart that answers this question. The one-page document is online at irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p1494.pdf or contact the IRS at 1-800-829-3676 for Publication 1494 (2009).

A few examples:

Filing Status	Number of Exemptions	Pay Period	Exempt Amount (the amount you keep)
Single	1	Weekly	\$179.81
Unmarried Head of Household	2	Biweekly	\$461.54
Married Filing Jointly	2	Biweekly	\$578.85

While salary levies are ongoing until the IRS collects what they want, levies for contractor income are still one-time-only for whatever is due at the time the levy arrives. Recently a war tax resister was levied at a college where she does contract work. The college insisted that the levy was ongoing, but

Many Thanks



Network Updates

We are grateful to these groups for recent contributions and dues payments:

War Tax Resisters Penalty Fund

Palo Alto Quaker Meeting

and to Bill Ramsey and the St. Louis Covenant Community of War Tax Resisters for their scarf selling efforts to benefit NWTRCC. Please contact the NWTRCC office to take some scarves on consignment.

Thanks to all who responded to the network mailing to update our Network List. Updates appear on the "Contacts and Counselors" page of the NWTRCC website. Print versions of the Network List, which are slightly more extensive, are available on request from the NWTRCC office.

Welcome to

Northeast Area Contact: Broome County Peace Action, c/o George Haeseler, 300 Fordham Rd., Vestal, NY 13850, (607) 729-1044, g.haeseler@verizon.net

Please let the NWTRCC office know if you are interested in being a contact on our network list. Email nwtrcc@nwtrcc.org or call toll free 1-800-269-7464.

they did finally call the IRS to ask. The IRS agent confirmed that it was a one-time levy.

Bank Levies and Fees

“Read the fine print” is a common piece of advice, which most of us probably ignore. Brochures with titles like “Important Account Information” are an invitation to naptime, but within the fine print of such a brochure sent to a Chase banker recently is a section called “Legal Processing Fee.” It notes that the fee for garnishments and levies on any deposit account will be up to \$100 per order. Now and then calls come to the NWTRCC office from people who have had their bank account levied and are shocked at the additional bank fee. Others say they have never had an added fee. In general, checking accounts will have a fee attached whereas savings accounts may not. However, it is best to “read the fine print” from your bank to be sure.

Sometimes bank fees can be beneficial. One WTR had left \$22.58 in his checking account, fearing a levy but hoping to retain the account. When the levy arrived, the bank took \$22 toward their usual \$75 levy fee, left 58 cents in the account, and told the IRS that no money was available. Months later no further levies have been sent and the resister continues to use the account.

In another case a resister had 7 cents in a savings account and \$9.67 in a checking account at the same bank. A levy arrived, and for the 21-day waiting period the accounts were shown “Pending hold.” Then the bank transferred the 7 cents from savings to checking before clearing out the checking account of the total \$9.74, which seemed to confirm that all one’s assets at any single bank will be seized at once, up to the tax due amount. In this case no fee was applied by the bank.

Collections Drop

The IRS did fewer audits and collected less money in its enforcement efforts last year than in the year before. A new report says that with 2% fewer employees working on enforcement cases, the amount of money the agency collected in this way dropped by almost 5%. The rate of audits fell across the board for both businesses and individuals — following a recent trend, this auditing drop was most dramatic for wealthy individuals and big businesses.

Source: taxprof.typepad.com/taxprof_blog/2008/12/irs-enforcement-fell-in-2008.html

Scavengers Taxed in CA

Among new laws taking effect in California in 2009 is a requirement that scavengers who collect glass and aluminum from recycling bins on the streets show identification and be paid with a check if they bring in a large amount of recyclables (worth over \$100). Supposedly the law is designed to limit illegal pilfering from recycling bins. The new law will allow police to track people who make large drop-offs, and the scavengers also could be liable for income tax.

Source: *San Francisco Chronicle* (12/29/08), and thanks to Doug Mackenzie.

Gift Tax Adjustment

The annual exclusion amount for gifts rose to \$13,000 after January 1, 2009. This amount is not taxable in the calendar year. For couples giving away jointly owned property, the annual exclusion amount in 2009 is

\$26,000. The IRS website has a lot of useful information about gift and estate taxes if you are looking for all the details.

Economic Ironies

Let’s see if we can explain this in a short paragraph. Municipal transit agencies in at least 25 cities, including those in the District of Columbia, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, have been big participants in tax shelters that were guaranteed by the insurance giant A.I.G. The agencies sold infrastructure to corporations, which then leased the structures back to the transit authorities. Such deals were made mostly in the 1990s through 2003 and provided cash for the transit agencies and tax breaks to corporations—and prompted investigations by the IRS, which considers these abusive tax transactions. The ironic

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INTERNATIONAL

International News Bulletins

Many participants at the 12th International Conference on War Tax Resistance and Peace Tax Campaigns (held last September in Manchester, UK) encouraged Conscience and Peace Tax International (CPTI) to expand its individual membership and to provide informational updates to this broader group of people. In response CPTI will send out regular email “news bulletins” that describe events of interest around the world. If you would like to be on the email list, contact Alan Gamble at alanjgamble@gmail.com.

CPTI also invites you to explore the website at cpti.ws and consider becoming a Supporting Member. Modest dues of \$25 per year will help to finance the website and keep the information flowing. In the United States or Canada, personal checks payable to PTF-CPTI may be sent to: Alan Gamble, CPTI Treasurer, 3100 Happy Valley Road, Jackson, MI 49203.

Conference DVD Available

For anyone very interested in the proceedings of the 12th International Conference, covered in the October issue of this news-

letter, copies of a DVD with all the plenary proceedings is available. The disk includes the full keynote address, “Towards Sustainable Security,” by Paul Rogers, Professor of Bradford University Peace Studies Department. If you would like a copy, please send a small contribution (\$3–\$5) for copying and postage to NWTRCC, PO Box 150553, Brooklyn, NY 11215. ▼



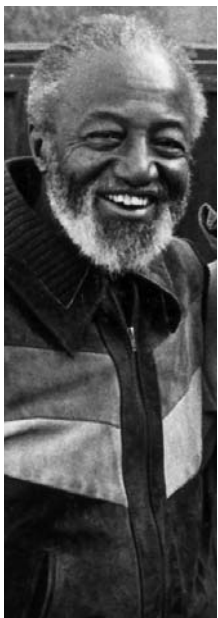
Paul Rogers. Photo by Ed Hedemann.

WTR Ideas and Actions

Wally Nelson Centenary Celebration

Sunday, March 29, 5:00 pm

Guiding Star Grange, 401 Chapman St.,
Greenfield, MA



All are welcome to a joyous commemoration of the amazing and inspiring life of organic farmer, early civil rights worker, practitioner of active nonviolence, and longtime war tax resister par excellence, Wally Nelson (1909–2002). Potluck supper begins at 5:00 pm, followed by a presentation of Wally's life, words of "Bean Patch" wisdom from Juanita Nelson, live music, and dancing.

For more information, contact Eveline MacDougall (413-773-8655) or Randy Kehler (413-624-8858, rkehler@crocker.com).

Photo by Ed Hedemann.

Authors in Our Midst

7 Steps to End War and Save the Planet is a pacifist's simple approach to solving one of the world's most difficult dilemmas. Author Steve Ratzlaff, is a board member of the Peace Tax Fund and a NWTRCC contact in California. The book was published in 2008 by Xlibris and is available at www.xlibris.com or from a bookstore near you.

One Hundred Miles from Home: Nuclear Contamination in the Communities of the Ohio River Valley covers the history of six nuclear installations from the Cold War era that are still causing environmental and health problems today. The book was written by Carol Rainey, an anti-nuclear activist from Cincinnati who

dedicates it in part to her friend and WTR legend Marion Bromley. Wendell Berry wrote the Foreword. Available for \$19 (includes postage) from Cyndell Press, 1497 Beacon St., Cincinnati, OH 45230, cyndellpress.com.

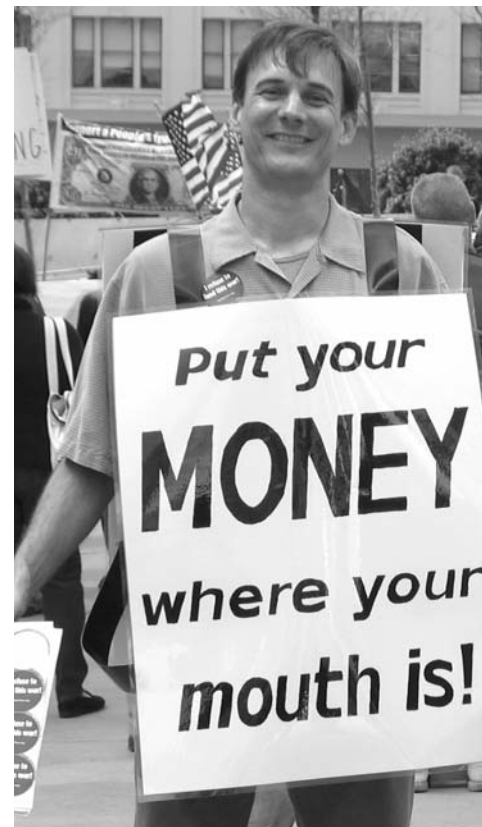
Don Kaufman (KS) recently sent this note: "As of yesterday I have completed reading David M. Gross's magnificent tax resistance reader titled *We Won't Pay!* Yes, I read all 566 pages. It is an amazing resource for historical information on conscience, dissent, government, militarism, nonviolence, patriotism, peacemaking, religious freedom, responsibility, revenue refusal, tax redirection, truth, violence, and war. The challenge now is for us to find readers who will dedicate time to read and digest material which will make a difference in our daily living." Available from create-space.com/3339658 or Amazon.com. David Gross is a member of NWTRCC's Administrative Committee.

International CO Info

Readers interested in conscientious objection should take a look at the redesigned WRI website, wri-irg.org. The site includes a new online Conscientious Objection Information System (COBIS), which will combine WRI's alert system in cases of imprisoned conscientious objectors, a conscientious objector and activist database, update e-newsletter, and world survey on conscientious objection and recruitment. There is also a permanent Prisoners for Peace list, to strengthen support for imprisoned conscientious objectors and peace activists.

NWTRCC on facebook.com

Yes, you can find war tax resistance on this vast social networking website. If you are a member of Facebook or decide to join, search on "National War Tax Resistance" and the



Author David Gross in action in San Francisco.
Photo by Susan Quinlan.

page should come up. Please sign on and get a discussion going! The more activity on the page, the more interest it attracts.

Selling Scarves: Event by Event

By Bill Ramsey, St. Louis Covenant Community of War Tax Resisters (SLCCWTR)

Our "Foreclose on War" scarves will not sell sitting in boxes in Brooklyn, Chicago, and St. Louis. We need everyone who supports NWTRCC to stock scarves and take them to events. We have found that they sell best at indoor events, when a speaker or MC announces their availability. We sold the most scarves at Camp Hope in Chicago during an evening forum in which the speaker wore a scarf and urged people to buy them.

Our best sales person in St. Louis is SLCCWTR member Hedy Epstein. She speaks around the country on the Israel/Palestine conflict and sells scarves as she goes. She even sold five in Texas. Joanne Sheehan took scarves to the People's Music Network gathering in January in New England. Dawn Rubbert, another SLCCWTR member, sold scarves at the St. Louis Friends Meeting. Portland (OR) Community of WTRs took 15 to sell at local events.

The scarves are seasonal. They are not likely to sell well after February 15, so please look at the calendar of events in your area and contact the NWTRCC office to get some scarves to sell. If each of us can wear a scarf and carry a backpack with five or six more to sell as we move around in meetings and events, we can spread a strong message and help balance the NWTRCC budget.

We have about 400 scarves in boxes. It would only take 40 NWTRCC friends selling 10 scarves each over the next two weeks to empty those boxes. Can you help us get them out of the boxes and over the shoulders of people around the country?

Order scarves from the NWTRCC office, 1-800-269-7464 or nwtrcc@nwtrcc.org ▼



2009 Boycott Resources

2009 War Tax Boycott materials are ready to download at wartaxboycott.org. Click on the "Tools" page. A radio or internet public service announcement (PSA) is on that page. If you have a friendly radio station in your area, please help promote our work by asking them to run our PSA.



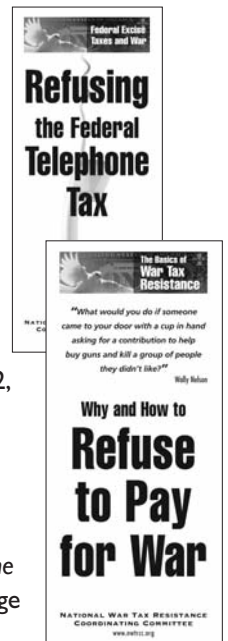
Boycott palm cards are available from the NWTRCC office. We should be able to circulate thousands of these cards between now and tax day! If you can help cover the costs, cards are 3 cents each plus postage (up to 500 fit in a priority mail envelope for \$4.95) or contact the office.

Stock Up for Tax Day!

Prepare for workshops, leafleting, and tabling materials between now and tax day! All bulk orders have postage in addition to the cost of materials and can be invoiced. Below are a few options. See the website, nwtrcc.org/publications.htm, for a full list or contact the NWTRCC office for a copy, 1-800-269-7464 or nwtrcc@nwtrcc.org.

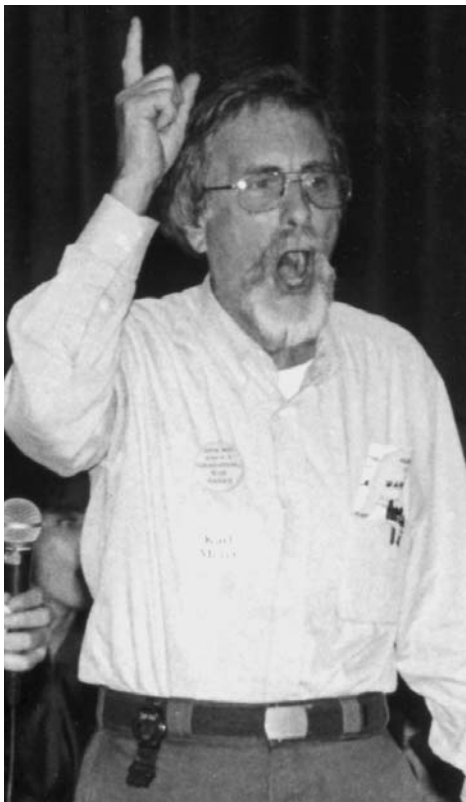
- "How to Refuse to Pay for War" (brochure) — 15¢ each general orders, 12¢ each for affiliates
- "How to Refuse the Federal Telephone Tax" (brochure) — 15¢ each general orders, 12¢ each for affiliates
- "Praying for Peace: A Christian Perspective" (brochure) — 15¢ each general orders, 12¢ each for affiliates
- "Where Your Income Tax Money Really Goes," pie chart flyer from War Resisters League. 2010 version available mid-February. 10¢ each for orders of 200 or fewer (WRL handles larger orders: 339 Lafayette St., NY, NY 10012, 212-228-0450).
- "Why Isn't Everyone Who's For Peace A War Tax Resister? Answers to Common Questions" (brochure) — 15¢ each general orders, 12¢ each for affiliates
- War Tax Resistance: A Guide to Withholding Your Support from the Military*, 144 page book. \$15 each plus \$4.95 first class postage (3+ copies for resale, \$9 each + postage)
- "War Tax Resistance At A Glance" (booklet) \$2 each; \$1 for affiliates
- "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience" Pamphlet essay by Henry David Thoreau — \$2.00 each
- "A Matter of Freedom" Essay by Juanita Nelson — \$1.50 each

Order from NWTRCC, PO Box 150553, Brooklyn, NY 11215 or call 1-800-269-7464. Website orders can be paid through Paypal with credit card or bank account debit. See www.nwtrcc.org/publications.htm.



Video Update

Our new film is getting closer. Early time-lines turned out to be a bit ambitious, but filmmaker Steev Hise has been working away, and a rough edit of the film is currently under review by the Video Committee. We are still hopeful that the film will be available for you or your group to show publicly during this tax season. Once again, we are grateful to all of you who gave special contributions for the film and trust that you will appreciate the final product.



Karl Meyer, 2005. Photo by Ed Hedemann.

Speakers Bureau

The NWTRCC website now features the beginnings of a War Tax Resistance Speakers Bureau! We are in the process of collecting biographies and profiles of war tax resisters who are willing to respond to invitations to speak on WTR and related topics. We are adding profiles as they come in, but so far the site includes Kathy Kelly, Bill Ramsey, Clare Hanrahan, Ed Hedemann, Karl Meyer, and Pat and John Schwiebert. You can find it at nwtrcc.org/Speakers/speakersbureau.html. Please send that link to groups, preachers, and teachers who might invite a speaker to a future event.

Nominations Open!

NWTRCC's Administrative Committee (AdComm) seeks new members to give oversight to day-to-day business operations and plan for the two meetings held each November and May. New members will be selected from nominees at the May 2009 meeting and serve as alternates for one year and full members for two years. Full members have travel paid to the meetings.

The time commitment involves the weekend meetings and two conference calls each year. The AdComm meets the full day Friday before the weekend gathering. Between meetings there are occasional emails, and we ask some willingness to volunteer for an extra project according to interest and availability. Qualifications include an interest in being part of NWTRCC's decision-making structure and a desire to help promote NWTRCC. Diversity considerations (geographic, gender, ethnic, etc.) are involved in selecting new members. You can expect great people to meet and work with and the pleasure of contributing to the smooth-running of the organization.

Current members are Robert Randall (GA)*, Pam Allee (OR)*, Donald Kaufman (KS), Mike Butler (NM), Melissa Jameson, (NY), and David Gross (CA).

Self nominations are fine, and affiliate groups should make a special effort to offer

nominations. Contact NWTRCC for a job description, or send in nominations and we will follow up with further details. Deadline for nominations is March 13, 2009.

**Terms ending in May*

Legislative Discussion

Last fall the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund asked its endorsers to renew their support. NWTRCC has been an endorser for many years, but the request was one that needed review by the Coordinating Committee, and the question was raised at our November 2008 meeting in Eugene. A range of opinions were expressed—pro, con, ambivalent—but more than we could accommodate at the November meeting.

Therefore, the May Coordinating Committee meeting and gathering will include time for a thorough airing of opinions about the bill and NWTRCC's endorsement. In addition, the April issue of *More Than A Paycheck* will include perspectives on the Peace Tax Fund bill and campaign. Feel free to send in your short comments (or contact the Editor, Ruth Benn, if you have a great deal to say and we'll see what we can fit). *MTAP*, PO Box 150553, Brooklyn, NY 11215 or nwtrcc@nwtrcc.org.

You can read about the campaign and also the text of the bill at peacetaxfund.org or contact the campaign for sample literature at 1-888-PEACE-TAX. ▼



School of Americas Watch tabling, November 21–23, 2008. Behind the tables (l to r), Joanne Sheehan, WRL New England, and Gary Erb and Robert Randall staffing the NWTRCC table. Once again thousands gathered to demand closure of the army school whose graduates too often go on to torture in their home countries. Many took brochures and signed up for more information on war tax resistance. Thanks to all who helped! Photo by Carol Coney.

Counseling Notes

continued from page 3

twist is that since A.I.G ran into big financial trouble, the transit agencies want the federal government to take over the insurer's role in these sale/lease schemes. So, the federal government may be buying into tax shelters that the IRS is working to stop. Just more grist for the mill for those who think the whole system is out of control.

—*New York Times* (11/5/08)

The Problem with Authority

Dana Visalli wrote on the War Tax Resistance Listserve (sign on at the "E-List" button on the NWTRCC website):

I had a funny experience on Thursday....I went to pick up my mail at the post office, and there was a certified letter waiting for me. At first I was vaguely excited, thinking it might be something interesting, and then I remembered Uncle Sam. The postmistress was about to scan it when I said, "Wait a minute, who is it from? I might not want it." She showed it to me, and it had a big IRS label on the return address. I asked her, "I don't have to take it do I?" She allowed that I was not required to accept it.

What struck me as funny in thinking about it later is that I was completely willing to stand up to the U.S. government with all its monstrous weapons and criminality, but I was afraid of the postmistress; if she told me I had to take it I probably would have. It's hard to get over this proclivity we have to do as we are told to do by an assumed external authority.

Thanks to Lincoln Rice for monitoring tax information and for some submissions. In addition, check out David Gross's blog for continuous musings and news related to war tax resistance:

<http://www.sniggle.net/Experiment>. ▼

In Memory

Lifelong war tax resisters and Brethren ministers, Phil Rieman and Louie Baldwin Rieman, were killed in a car accident shortly after Christmas in Indiana.

They lived near Indianapolis, and Phil was a NWTRCC area contact.

Both were active with the Peace Tax Fund campaign, and Phil had just been at the SOAW vigil in November.

They will be sorely missed.

Bitten By A Shark

by John Parrish

Sometimes nasty results come from seemingly simple positive actions. That was our situation recently. As first-time war tax protesters, my wife Kate and I signed on to support the 2008 War Tax Boycott and withheld a symbolic \$50.00. This small token was forwarded to Direct Aid Initiative, towards medical needs of Iraqi refugees in Jordan. We dutifully enclosed a letter of explanation as to our actions. At most we expected to receive a chastising letter from the IRS, a small penalty, and a demand to pay the tardy amount.

Imagine our surprise when four months later we received a letter from the IRS, threatening each of us with a \$5,000 penalty for filing a frivolous tax return. The letter went on to state that any further action on our part would cause an additional \$5,000 fine for each of us, without further notice or reason. After shaking off the initial shock and consulting with fellow WTR colleagues, we learned that this IRS tactic was new to all of them. We decided to pay the late amount and did so, within the time period specified. Thinking the matter had come to a logical conclusion, we felt able to shift our gears and to think of how next to act as war tax resisters.

Not so! Four months later, we received dual letters in the mail from the IRS, this time informing us that we each had been issued a

penalty of \$5,000, payable in 13 days. This from our beneficent government! Disbelief both at the gross inefficient workings (we had paid!) and malignance (\$5,000 fine for a \$50.00 withholding????!!) of the IRS prevailed in our hearts. We were stunned. Thought of retaining legal counsel began.

On the good advice of fellow resisters, we contacted our local Congressman's office, explained the whole story, and they went into action with lightning speed. Through their auspices, we faxed copies of all of our IRS correspondence and paperwork to the IRS Legislative Advocates, both in our home state and in Washington, DC. In a matter of two weeks, we had a preliminary abatement, and in another three weeks we received formal letters from the IRS *CREDITING* us with the amount of \$10,000 on our case! There was no apology (had we really expected them to do so?) nor was there ANY explanation. Our relief was palpable.

Finally, we received another letter from the IRS, billing us a more rational \$54.00, late fee for the money that was withheld. That we will pay! Hopefully with the payment of this fee our inaugural action with NWTRCC will be culminated. Oh boy! What shall we do for resistance excitement next year?!

—*John and Kate Parrish are active with Eugene Taxes for Life!, which has supported them during their "frivolous" ordeal. For more information see nwtrcc.org/frivolous.htm or the December 2008 issue of this newsletter.*

Exclusive Presale Offer!

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

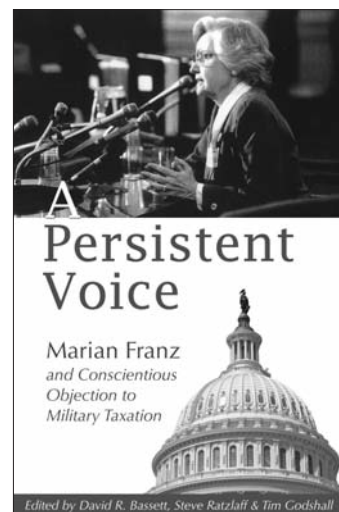
Edited by David R. Bassett, Steve Ratzlaff, and Tim Godshall

Published by Cascadia Publishing and The Peace Tax Foundation, April 2009

This collection of essays by Marian Franz spans her 23 years of lobbying Congress to enact the Peace Tax Fund Bill. Eight additional chapters by her colleagues add complementary information on topics such as international human rights, the history of conscientious objection in the U.S., and war tax resistance, along with memories of Franz who died in November 2006.

Orders received by March 31, 2009, will receive a 10% discount and free media mail shipping in the U.S.

For advanced orders contact: Cascadia Publishing, 126 Klingerman Road, Telford PA 18969, 215-723-9125, or download the order form at www.cascadiapublishinghouse.com/apv/apv.htm.



Open Letter To Barack Hussein Obama

By Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, Former Prime Minister of Malaysia (1981–2003)

Editor's Note: This piece was forwarded to NWTRCC from Proyecto Paz and is online at rense.com/general84/mahr.htm. It's rather risky to run a piece written by a former head of state. We probably have many areas of disagreement. However, it seemed to offer a good list of war tax resister-like demands. Perhaps readers will respond with their own ideas and thoughts on what it will take to get to a better world and whether our organizing needs a new approach under this new administration.

Dear Mr. President,

I did not vote for you in the Presidential Election because I am Malaysian.

But I consider myself one of your constituents because what you do or say will affect me and my country as well.

I welcome your promise for change. Certainly your country, the United States of America needs a lot of changes.

That is because America and Americans have become the best hated people in the world. Even Europeans dislike your arrogance. Yet you were once admired and liked because you freed a lot of countries from conquest and subjugation.

It is the custom on New Year's day for people to make resolutions. You must have listed your good resolutions already. But may I politely suggest that you also resolve to do the following in pursuit of Change.

1) Stop killing people. The United States is too fond of killing people in order to achieve its objectives. You call it war, but today's wars are not about professional soldiers fighting and killing each other. It is about killing people, ordinary innocent people by the hundreds of thousands. Whole countries will be devastated.

War is primitive, the cavemen's way of dealing with a problem. Stop your arms build up and your planning for future wars.

2) Stop indiscriminate support of Israeli killers with your money and your weapons. The planes and the bombs killing the people of Gaza are from you.

3) Stop applying sanctions against countries which cannot do the same against you.

In Iraq your sanctions killed 500,000 children through depriving them of medicine and food. Others were born deformed.

What have you achieved with this cruelty? Nothing except the hatred of the victims and right-thinking people.

4) Stop your scientists and researchers from inventing new and more diabolical weapons to kill more people more efficiently.

5) Stop your arms manufacturers from producing them. Stop your sales of arms to the world. It is blood money that you earn. It is un-Christian.

6) Stop trying to democratize all the countries of the world. Democracy may work for the United States but it does not always work for other countries.

Don't kill people because they are not democratic. Your crusade to democratize countries has killed more people than the authoritarian Governments which you overthrew. And you have not succeeded anyway.

7) Stop the casinos which you call financial institutions. Stop hedge funds, derivatives and currency trading. Stop banks from lending non-existent money by the billions.

Regulate and supervise your banks. Jail the miscreants who made profits from abusing the system.

8) Sign the Kyoto Protocol and other international agreements.

9) Show respect for the United Nations.

I have many other resolutions for change which I think you should consider and undertake.

But I think you have enough on your plate for this 2009th year of the Christian Era.

If you can do only a few of what I suggest, you will be remembered by the world as a great leader. Then the United States will again be the most admired nation. Your embassies will be able to take down the high fences and razor-wire coils that surround them.

May I wish you a Happy New Year and a great Presidency. ▼

January 2, 2009



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