

IF YOU WORK
FOR PEACE



STOP PAYING
FOR WAR.

More than a paycheck

NEWS FROM THE WAR TAX RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

February/March 2012

Campaigns and Commentary 2012 Tax Season

By Ruth Benn

Activist and author Shane Claiborne wrote an article in March 2011 titled “Give to Uncle Sam What Is Uncle Sam’s: Tax Season War Resistance.” It was posted on the Huffington Post website and began:

Imagine what would happen if a massive popular movement of ordinary Americans decided to voice their concern about military spending—by withholding \$10.40 from their 1040 tax forms this year? A simple, small, symbolic, but concrete gesture of protest to the \$200,000 dollars a minute being spent on militarism while programs that support life go bankrupt.

Claiborne endorsed the 1040 for Peace campaign (1040forpeace.org) and refused a percentage of his payment (\$97.33) based on a calculation of federal military spending when he filed with the IRS. Action, not just well-written words.

Many considering war tax resistance think all or nothing. John Stoner, retired Mennonite minister and a NWTRCC contact in Pennsylvania, is one of the people behind 1040 for Peace. He’s written a thought-provoking article, “Occupy, Capitalistic Greed and Homicidal Security,” that ends with this challenge: “You could well justify doing more than \$10.40 for peace. But how would you justify doing less? Discuss it with a friend. Then do it.” (See the 1040 website for the full article or ask us for a copy.)

NWTRCC sponsors the War Tax Boycott campaign, wartaxboycott.org. At our November 2011 meeting it was decided to try to bring more attention this year to the campaign and especially to the public signers list. In part this was in response to Larry Rosenwald’s “WTR Manifesto” in our Sept./Oct. issue where he calls for us to intensify our “friction against the machine” by being more public about our civil disobedient refusal to pay for war, among other actions. The War Tax Boycott allows resisters and refusers of all types to add their name to an online registration and public list that may be used in press releases and other outreach. We are including the sign-on form in this newsletter. If you are not on the list already or you aren’t sure, please join with hundreds of others and help grow our public resistance by sending in the form or signing up online.

Over the past few decades there have been many ideas to make war

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Will Travers, Bill Ofenloch, and David McReynolds on Tax Day 2011, NYC.

Photo by Ed Hedemann.



2012 WAR TAX BOYCOTT

“...if the tax resistance spread in the U.S., the world would be a big step toward civilization against militarization.”

—Pedro Otaduy

Sign on today. Go to wartaxboycott.org and register your resistance, or use the form enclosed with this newsletter. Make your resistance public and help war tax resistance spread in the U.S.

IF YOU WORK FOR PEACE



More than a paycheck

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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.

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Taxable Income Levels

NWTRCC presents the standard deductions and personal exemption chart as a guide for people who choose to live below the taxable income. To figure out how much you can earn in 2012 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 \$15,200 (\$3,800 x 4) to \$11,900, equaling a taxable level of \$27,100. 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.

2012 IRS Deductions and Exemptions

Category	Standard Deduction	Personal Exemption
Single	\$5,950	\$3,800
Married, filing jointly	\$11,900	\$3,800
Married, filing separately	\$5,950	\$3,800
Head of household	\$8,700	\$3,800

An additional \$1,150 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 \$1,450.

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

We suggest that nonfilers fill out the forms and keep their receipts for reference in case their circumstances change or the IRS comes calling.

Bank Accounts Are Vulnerable

If you have a debt with the IRS, your assets are vulnerable. The IRS does not always find and seize accounts, but they can (property seized from WTRs, like houses, is uncommon these days). The IRS is supposed to send a "final notice, intent to levy" first, and if you did not receive that notice you can try to challenge them on it. In most cases the government just has to prove they sent the notice, not that you received it.

The easiest way for the IRS to find bank accounts is through the annual interest reports that banks are required to send if you earn \$10 or more in interest during a calendar year. It is also possible that the dollar value of any special bank promotion or premium will be considered paid interest if the value of the premium is \$10 or more. Your bank statements should show year-to-date interest figures starting each Jan. 1.

One protection—or at least one step that makes it harder for the IRS to find accounts—is to use a no-interest account. Some war tax resisters with tax debts have kept such accounts for years with no levies from the IRS. If you pay state taxes or part of your federal taxes, get a money order rather than writing a check from your bank account. Naturally, keeping money out of banks offers the most protection from an IRS seizure.

Gift Taxes

Having less money keeps us safer from collection, and some readers may find that they'd like to give

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Many Thanks



Network Updates

Welcome to St. Lawrence House in Kansas City, a new local affiliate! Thanks to them for a dues payment and to: Resources and Organizing for Social Change, ME Taxes for Peace, Eugene, OR Lehigh Valley Fund, PA Christian Peacemaker Teams Milwaukee WTR

And to each of you who made an end-of-the-year donation to NWTRCC! We are grateful to Julia Butterfly Hill for writing an appeal for NWTRCC. The response it generated will certainly get us to the organization's 30th anniversary this fall!

NWTRCC's Network List of Affiliates, Area Contacts, Counselors, and Alternative Funds appears on the website, or request a list from the NWTRCC office.

Please let us know if you are interested in being a contact on our network list: nwtrcc@nwtrcc.org or 1-800-269-7464.

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

Focus, Variety and Change

By Pedro Otaduy

This article about war tax resistance in Spain is from a presentation that Pedro Otaduy gave at the 10th International Conference on War Tax Resistance and Peace Tax Campaigns in 2004. Readers will find similarities in concerns and challenges and perhaps some strategic ideas for our own planning. Pedro was the driving force of *Campaña de Objeción Fiscal al Gasto Milita* in Spain, a committed pacifist, and the Chairperson of Conscience and Peace Tax International. Many of us met him at international meetings. He died on January 8, 2012, at age 53 after an illness.



Pedro Otaduy. Photo by Friedrich Heilmann.

Spanish Income Tax season goes from the middle of April to the end of June. Our campaign has three phases. First, before the income tax season is open, spreading ideas: we talk with mass media, we prepare press releases, we send information to tax resisters and groups closely linked to us. Second phase, during the income tax season: we stay once a week in our office giving help to those people who want to do tax resistance. Third phase, after June, we collect the results of the campaign, preparing statistics to be sent to mass media, tax resisters and other groups.

We have a clear problem: we manage to have contact with people that are already engaged in antimilitarism or in other groups or issues as environment, social work, trade

unions, internationalism, but it is very difficult for us to contact new people, that is, to the biggest part of the society.

I can give you an example: In Navarra there were a thousand young people were *insumisos* (total resisters) against military service. More than 500 spent two years, four months and one day in prison because of this. But we have never been more than 200 tax resisters in Navarra. There were families that had their son in prison and meanwhile were still paying for the military without any kind of resistance. Why?

We find two reasons: fear of the Inland Revenue Service (IRS), and the opinion that this is a way that will not bring us to the end of armies.

To be afraid of the IRS is logical: what we propose to do is quite serious. We say to the government that we don't agree with it, and that has its importance. And there is another thing: perhaps more than fear is just comfort. If we don't do anything we will have less troubles.

But, to say that by this way we will not reach our purposes is hard to hear. *Insumisos* (total resisters) showed us that it is really possible to defeat the government by means of nonviolent civil disobedience.

...It is very important to be critical of the military budget. It's important to insist on this criticism. We are in campaign from April to June, but during all the year we have to be active. We have to be able to use tax resistance as a support of our criticism.

Read this report online at cpti.ws/conf/04/2/2_2_3.html. There is more explanation in the 2004 conference reports of Spanish tax resistance or "non-cooperation with the government on the military budget" as Pedro called it.

Counseling Notes

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some away without incurring tax consequences. For 2012 the annual gift exclusion remains at \$13,000. If you are married, both you and your spouse can separately give gifts valued up to \$13,000 to the same person without making a taxable gift. There is no IRS reporting for the recipient of the gift either, although banks do report transactions over \$10,000. Some banks might report lower amounts, but in any case the IRS doesn't necessarily pay attention to each single



Support International Work

Conscience and Peace Tax International (CPTI) was founded in 1994 to bring international attention to conscientious objection to the use of taxes for military purposes. In particular, CPTI works through the UN where it enjoys special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Representatives, acting in Geneva and New York have participated in all sessions of the Human Rights Council from April 2001 till today. The website, cpti.ws, connects war tax resisters and peace tax campaigners worldwide and includes a good section on court cases with links to the case documents. The organization is based in Belgium, and the current board members are from Colombia, U.S., Germany, Belgium, Italy, and Spain. CPTI's General Assembly meets every two years at the international conferences.

When NWTRCC finances are good, we donate to CPTI, but we also encourage individuals to help as they can. Donate online at cpti.ws/about/contribute.html. If you prefer to give by check, make it payable to and send to NWTRCC with a memo "CPTI." We will transfer the donation to Belgium. ▼

transaction as they are looking for patterns of suspicious activity. There is also something called "gift splitting" by the IRS. If one spouse gives more than the \$13,000 exclusion, the gift can be considered as made one-half by you and one-half by your spouse. Currently, gift splitting allows married couples to give up to \$26,000 to a person without making a taxable gift, but in this case each spouse (not the recipient) must file a Form 709 with the IRS even if half of the split gift is less than the annual exclusion. Should this be of interest to readers, research it further on the IRS website or with a financial advisor. ▼

WTR Ideas and Actions

Taking Action

Jason Rawn of Union, Maine, sent the following letter to community radio stations in Maine. With it he included a list of related events and contact information for himself and relevant Maine groups.

Dear Maine Community Radio Community,

Please consider producing a segment or series on War Tax Resistance for your local affairs programming between now and April 15. War Tax Resistance (WTR) is a form of conscientious objection where individuals refuse payment of some or all of their "tax obligations" to the IRS because such a huge portion (48%, or \$1,372 billion for 2012) is spent on war and other forms of empire building. WTRs redirect these funds to local, regional, national, and international organizations, projects, and people working for democracy, peace, and economic justice. Recipients of redirected funds from Maine WTRs include the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, Maine's first permablitz, peace organizations, and at least one underfunded public school's music program, to name just a few.

WTR is seen by many as illegal, and WTRs sometimes face harassment, seizure of withheld taxes, and, very occasionally, property seizure. A common notion among us is that the consequences of paying taxes are more dire than the consequences of not paying.



Jason Rawn. NWTRCC photo.

Allen Ginsberg, Cindy Sheehan, and Julia Butterfly Hill are some well-known WTRs from recent decades, but tax resistance has a long and interesting history. Jesus of Nazareth, Thoreau, and Gandhi are all known for their refusal to be complicit in government injustice.

Some specific suggestions for WTR-related local affairs programming this tax season include panels/call-ins around the Occupy Movement, taxpayer priorities, local economies; WTR interviews/profiles; reportage around the funding of community radio vs. the funding of drones and torture.

There's a lot going on in this historical moment in which we find ourselves. It's my hope that we Mainers can collaborate to produce some timely local affairs programming on WTR, a little-known, highly-empowering, common sense, and potentially crucial form of grassroots activism that can be done in some form or other by virtually anyone. As a member of the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee's Administrative team, I will rewrite this letter in a couple weeks to send to Local Affairs programmers nationwide. It will have a more significant impact if a number of us here in Maine have already committed to airing fair and balanced content relating to War Tax Resistance.

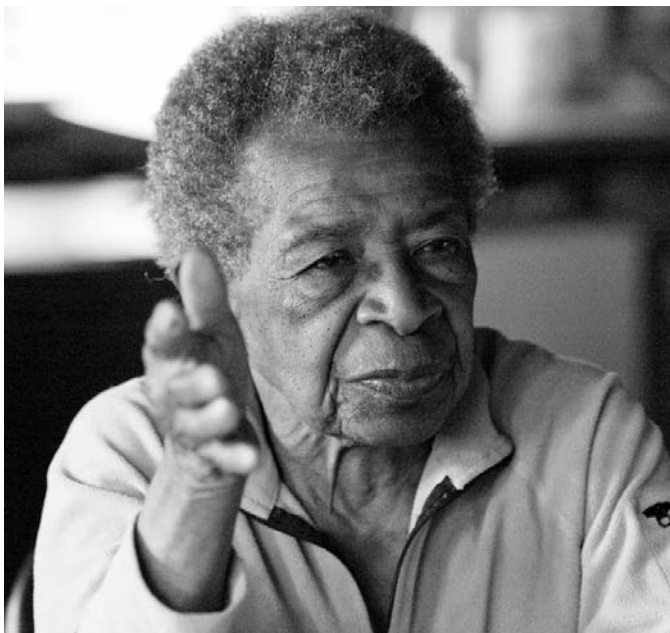
Frivolous Adventures

A few years ago Vickie Aldrich started a blog with her father's letters written when he was in Civilian Public Service camp during WWII. She posts about one letter a week and then writes a little something to go with it. After the IRS got in touch about her so-called "frivolous filing," Vickie has worked her adventures with the IRS into some entries in the last year. The blog is at Mathewch5v9.blogspot.com, a name she chose from the envelopes her father used, which had "Blessed are the Peacemakers, Mathew 5:9" printed on the outside. Scroll through the blog and join her adventure.

A Small Victory

Bill Ruhaak, a war tax resister in Illinois, appealed a Tax Court decision regarding his objection to paying for war to the 7th Circuit Federal Court. The Appeals Court agreed with the Tax Court, giving no allowance to refusal to pay for war. The Court asked Bill to respond as to why he should not receive a \$4,000 fine. He submitted a memorandum, and the court issued this decision in September 2011:

"On May 20, 2011, this court affirmed the decision of the Tax Court and ordered the appellant to show cause why he should not be sanctioned for filing a frivolous appeal. Based on Ruhaak's response to our show-cause order, we have determined that sanctions are unwarranted in this case. We note, however, that sanctions may be appropriate in the future if Ruhaak continues to file frivolous tax appeals."



After taking a fall last October, Juanita Nelson has moved from the house she and Wally shared for years on Woolman Hill to live with friends in Turners Falls. She'd love to receive mail and hear what's happening with war tax resistance and peace work in your community.

Write her c/o
Ellie Kastanopolous
127 3rd Street
Turners Falls
MA 01376-1321

Photo by Ed Hedemann,
June 2011.

RESOURCES

The U.S. Supreme Court has been petitioned. The Ruhaak case may eventually be used as a vehicle for a group submission to a United Nations human rights review procedure. Watch for updates in this newsletter.



Penny polling in Bangor, Maine, November 2011. See what you can do if you don't have a table!

Election Day Penny Poll

With all the news about Republican primaries, it's a good time to suggest a good use of election day. Maine activists used their November 2011 election day to set up Penny Polls in 11 towns and cities throughout the state. The Maine polling was organized by the Bring Our War \$\$ Home campaign (including many war tax resisters), and about 2,075 voters participated as they exited polling stations. Participants were given 10 pennies to spread among 10 jars representing the largest parts of the federal discretionary budget. The results were similar to many such polls we've presented in this newsletter: 19.5% education; 17.5% health care; 13.2% veterans benefits; 9.8% food/agriculture; 9.3% environment/science; 7.7% transportation; 7.5% interest on the national debt; 6.5% defense; 6.4%, housing/urban development; 2.7% general government. The results were announced at a press conference at the Federal Building in Bangor.

"If [Congresspeople] vote from their personal preferences or based on the influence of lobbyists representing narrow special interests, that wouldn't be the kind of democracy that most people want," stated Larry Dansinger of Monroe, who conducted one of the polls. ▼

Alternative Funds

Usually this page lists some of our published resources, but instead we will devote it to a list of the alternative funds around the country where war tax resisters can deposit their redirected taxes. Donations from non-resisters are welcome too. This list is on our website at nwtrcc.org/redirection.php where you can find email addresses, or contact the NWTRCC office at 800-269-7464 for full contact information. Some of these funds are more formal than others. In some areas not listed, such as in Eugene, Oregon, each year a number of resisters come together and pool their funds to make redirected donations on tax day rather than establish an ongoing fund. Please send reports about your individual and group redirections to the NWTRCC office so that we can pool all the information about how we'd rather see our tax dollars used.

Farmington-Scipio Regional Friends Escrow Account

Ithaca, NY, Tom Joyce · (607) 277-7426

Cambridge Friends Meeting Peace Tax Fund

Cambridge, MA · (617) 876-1868

Pioneer Valley War Tax Resistance

Brattleboro, VT · (802) 387-2798

New England War Tax Resistance

Dorchester, MA · (617) 282-3783

ME WTR Resource Center

Monroe, ME · (207) 525-7776

New York City People's Life Fund

New York, NY · (212) 929-4833
nycplf.org

Peace Tax Escrow Account

Purchase Quarterly Meeting, New York
nyym.org/purchasequarter/peacetax.html

Princeton Fund for Life

Princeton, NJ
peacecoalition.org

Ithaca War Tax Resisters

Ithaca, NY

Friends United Meeting Peace Tax Fund

Richmond, IN · (765) 962-7573

Lehigh Valley WTR Life Fund

Riegelsville, PA · (610) 691-8730

Madison Area WTR/Alternative Fund

Madison, WI · (608) 257-2554

Conscience & Military Tax Campaign (CMTC) Escrow Account

St. Louis, MO · (314) 374-7446



Giving away redirected tax dollars warms you up on a cold tax day. Mary Regan (left) gives out grants from the New England War Tax Resistance Alternative Fund. Photo by Craig Simpson.

Southern California War Tax Alternative Fund

Los Angeles, CA · (323) 660-4992
so-cal-war-tax-resist.org

Northern California People's Life Fund

Berkeley, CA · (510) 842-6124
nowartax.org

Sonoma County Taxes for Peace

Woody Schwartz War Tax Redirection Fund, Santa Rosa, CA

These funds help reimburse war tax resisters for penalties and interest if the government has seized refused taxes. Contributors share in financial support for resisters:

War Tax Resisters Penalty Fund

PO Box 25, N. Manchester, IN 46962
nwtrcc.org/wtrpf.php

Penalty Sharing Community

Iowa Peace Network
4211 Grand Ave. NE, Des Moines, IA 50312
iowapeacenetWORK.org/penalty-sharing-community.htm

Save the Dates – NWTRCC Gathering

May 18-20, 2012

57th Street Meeting of Friends · Chicago, IL

Plans are developing for our next national gathering, which will be in conjunction with demonstrations during the NATO and G8 Summit in Chicago. NWTRCC's November Coordinating Committee decided to shift from our usual time during the first weekend of May and involve ourselves in demonstrations with the wider anti-war/peace and justice movement. There are indications that activists from around the world will be coming to Chicago, and we'll plan to participate on Saturday, May 19. Our weekend begins with dinner on Friday and ends Sunday afternoon.



NWTRCC gatherings include lots of serious fun, like demonstrating at the Nuclear Parts Plant in Kansas City in November 2011. Join us in Chicago where we'll participate in the NATO/G8 protests. *NWTRCC photo.*

Email Discussion Group

The war tax resisters listserv, has now settled into its new home at riseup.net. To read it online go to <http://lists.riseup.net> and enter "wtr-s" (without the quote marks) in the "Search lists" box at the top of the page. Once you're at the wtr-s home page you can, if you wish, subscribe to the list and/or sign up to riseup. Once you subscribe, you'll be able to interact with the list through your email. Signing up to riseup will allow you to post to the list from the web interface. Thanks to Ed Agro for his work on this!

Call for Nominees

NWTRCC's Administrative Committee (AdComm) seeks three new members to give oversight to day-to-day business operations and to plan for the two meetings held each November and May. New members will be selected from nominees at the May 2012 Coordinating Committee meeting. One nominee will join as a full member for two years. The other two will serve as alternates for one year and full members for two years. Self nominations are welcome, and affiliate

groups should make a special effort to offer nominations. Contact NWTRCC for more information. Nominees will receive a letter with further details. Deadline for nominations is March 1, 2012.

Kansas City Follow-up

Charles Carney, NWTRCC contact in Kansas City and one of five resisters who crossed the line Nov. 6 at the new nuclear weapons parts plant in Kansas City, pled "not guilty by reason of sanity" at a Jan. 17 hearing. He was given a trial date of Feb. 21. After the hearing, Carney who is a social worker, said, "We cut funds for people with schizophrenia but spend millions of dollars to revamp nuclear weapons. I personally don't feel I did anything wrong."

Three other defendants, represented by attorney Henry Stoever, submitted pleas of guilty and received sentences of 25 hours of community service in their local areas. They are Jim Hannah of Independence, Missouri; Erica Weiland of Seattle; and Kima Garrison of Portland, Oregon. A fifth trespasser, Jason Rawn of Union, Maine, spent the night of Nov. 6 in jail, was released on time served, and therefore was not called to the hearing. The out-of-towners were in Kansas City for NWTRCC's gathering hosted by the local activists. Erica says, "I'm glad to have the additional impetus to do more community service and am hoping to volunteer with an organization that helps prisoners." ▼

Mahatma Gandhi • John Woolman • Larry Rosenwald • Juanita Nelson • Julia Butterfly Hill • John Adams • Paul Cuffe • Pyotr Kropotkin • William Lloyd Garrison • Charles Kellems • Lucy Stone • Ammc • n Mayer • Karl Hess • Upham • Jenkins • Gene St • Grimké • el Edward Alexandr • ebel • Kat Konkin I • a Gandhi • a Butterfly Hill • Jo • Carl V • y Rothbard Leo Tols • Thoreau • Ricketso • Benjamin Hennacy • Ammon Bernard • Karl Hess • ne Sharp • Julia Sn • Alexander Hamilton • nie Shaw • Beatrice • nkin III • Richard • g • Robert McGee • Woolman • Larry Ro • John Adams • Paul C • l Watner • William • Tolstoy • Vivien Kellems • Ricketson Tucker • Lucy Stone • Elizabeth • on Hennacy • Karl Marx • Allen Ginsberg • Milton Maye • Hess • Bernard Offen • Peace Pilgrim • Thomas C. Upham • Gene Sharp • Julia Sm • on • Cha • trice

WE WON'T PAY!

A Tax Resistance Reader

Edited by David M. Gross

<http://createspace.com/3339658>

2012 Tax Season

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tax resistance a more visible action promoted by the antiwar, peace and justice movements. Many resisters get discouraged because the number of WTRs doesn't seem to grow, or they feel that their one-person refusal is having no effect.

In addition, even in progressive circles when resisters speak out they often receive a barrage of criticisms. On the internet, articles about war tax resistance, like Shane Claiborne's, are followed by open comments where the majority question this action. When we have time (ha!) resisters who read some of the blogs and news sites should post comments about their war tax refusal with links to one of our websites. We have to take extra steps to make this network more visible.

On this topic, Cindy Sheehan responded to critics of her (very public) war tax resistance in a piece called "Love it, or leave it" v. "Loathe it and stay to fight it" on her blog Cindy Sheehan's Soapbox. To the comment, "Taxes pay for good things like roads, bridges, libraries, Social Security and Medicare," she says:

First of all, let's say that our roads and bridges aren't falling apart; and that libraries, schools, Social Security and Medicare are not being robbed of funding—when I do drive, I pay gas taxes and bridge tolls. I also pay sales tax, park fees, and many other varieties of taxes and fees for things I actually do use. At least 54% of federal expenditures are to pay for current wars or to service debt on past wars. If my tax money would go to single-payer health care, fully-funded schools and other social programs, etc.—I would gladly pay. However, even if I decided to pay 46% of my taxes, would I be guaranteed that not one thin dime of mine would be going to kill someone? I think war profiteering has first claim on any money here in the dis-United Empire of the Earth.

Recently I was forwarded a list of the "Top Censored Stories of 2011" from Project Censored, projectcensored.org. When I find myself wavering in my war tax resistance ("it's too much hassle;" "my family thinks I'm nuts;" "there are so few of us;" "the IRS will get it in the end") the news—or censored

news—bucks me up again. How about just the top four to remind us why we do what we do:

1. More U.S. Soldiers Committed Suicide Than Died in Combat
2. U.S. Military Manipulates the Social Media
3. Obama Authorizes International Assassination Campaign
4. Global Food Crisis Expands

It's not just the amount of money that the military gets, it's where it's not going of course. Hunger increasing in the U.S. in this day and age? It's just shocking.

With tax day in front of us, I encourage you to join us if you have not already. Sign on to the War Tax Boycott; buy some flyers and hand them between now and tax day; host a showing of our film "Death and Taxes"; set up a penny poll on a busy street corner; do one extra action related to war tax resistance between now and tax day. You'll find some ideas in this issue and lots more on our website, including at nwtrcc.org/what_you_can_do.php. ▼

Ruth Benn is NWTRCC Coordinator and takes action locally with NYC War Resisters League and a loose collection of NYC war tax resisters.

A Way of Life

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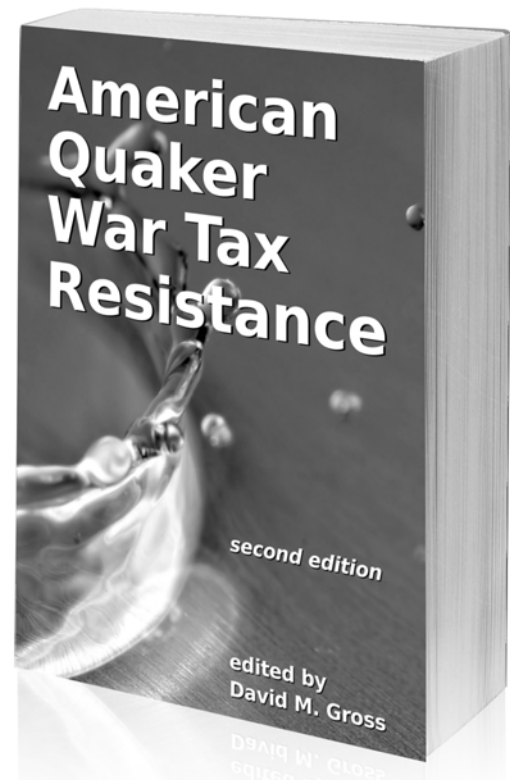
wasn't paying my share, but enjoying the benefits of what they were paying for. I did and do still feel an obligation to better my community and the world, but I have found a different way to contribute. By requiring my employers to keep my wages below the taxable level, I have helped in the development of the Kansas City Interfaith Peace Alliance, Episcopal Social Services, Catholic Charities Refugee Services, English as a Second Language program, and Literacy Kansas City, enabling each organization to offer a service previously unaffordable. I've also been able to give shelter now and then for folks in need.

I'm very grateful to have found in the Kansas City area like-minded people who strengthen my resolve and inform my conscience. But we can't let ourselves be content with our tax refusal alone. The lives of billions of people depend on our resistance to the mighty military machine and the unjust policies of our government. Millions have already died at the hands of our military and its proxies. Millions, maybe billions more, have died for lack of food, shelter and medical care because of resources given to military priorities rather than human needs. And the entire planet is at risk if we cannot control the demonic nuclear weapons being created in our own backyard in Kansas City.

In one way I'm glad this new nuclear weapons plant is being built here, because here there are people who will not be quiet about the killing machine it is going to construct. We will not accept that its existence is inevitable. We will not believe that this is the best way to bring jobs to our community. And we will not give our consent to the insanity of nuclear deterrence and nuclear suicide. ▼

"intelligent and intense"
—Western Friend

"a wonderful resource"
—Quaker Pagan Reflections



<http://createspace.com/3710737>

Paid advertisement

A Protest Becomes A Way of Life

By Beth Seberger

This is the text of Beth's presentation at the November 2011 WTR gathering in Kansas City. You can watch it on [YouTube.com](#); search on "Why I am a War Tax Resister.wmv."

In 1970, two years out of college, as a recent arrival to Kansas City, and in the midst of the Vietnam War, I became a war tax resister. Why?

Because when I told a friend I didn't feel right about paying the IRS that year because of our country's involvement in the Vietnam War, he said, "Then don't! Haven't you ever heard of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker? They don't pay taxes."

This was astounding news to me, and I was ready for it. I had two older brothers serving in the Air Force in the war, but I had been more influenced by Martin Luther King Jr. and his example of nonviolent resistance. I was seeing many young men my age struggling with their consciences over what to do about the draft. We women didn't have that decision to face, but I felt paying taxes showed support and actually did give money to help carry on the war. The war resisters' tax pie chart in that period showed 69% of discretionary spending going to pay for past present or future war expenditures. 69%! I only owed \$18 and change for my 1969 taxes, but I sent a letter to IRS with my tax return and no check.

Several years later, the IRS tried to garnish my wages for that \$18. I told my supervisor I would work for free until such time as the garnishment was lifted. The church board had to approve that decision, and they did. My supervisor used the money saved from my salary refusal to help some parents who had lost their jobs pay for their children's childcare fees.

The garnishment was actually lifted several months later and I didn't know why. It turned out that the IRS had found an old bank account my parents had for me in Nebraska. The bank had let my parents know the IRS was trying to collect it, and my parents paid it and didn't tell me till three months later.

I wasn't a very mature or well-informed war tax resister, so after the war in Vietnam ended I thought maybe the war tax resistance campaign would be over, and I called

to ask Angie O'Gorman. Angie, with her husband Bob Calvert, had moved the national office of War Tax Resistance to Kansas City in the 1970s.

She straightened me out in a hurry! "Do you want to pay for nuclear weapons?" she said, and then mentioned a few other obviously morally objectionable U.S. military interventions. And so it happened that what began for me as a protest against one war became a way of life. I was a single parent by then, so I chose to keep my income below the taxable level so I wouldn't risk imprisonment for refusing to pay taxes. *[Ed's note: Jail is a common fear but remains highly unlikely for war tax resisters.]*

It was a challenge to raise a son as a single parent on such a modest income, but sharing housing with friends helped us get through, and my parents' made a gift to me of their old car. As a young teenager my son started to complain about our simple lifestyle. I remember the day he said, "Mom, you probably wouldn't even owe more than a couple hundred dollars—that wouldn't even buy one gun!" I just reminded him that he had



Beth Seberger. Photo by Susan Miller.

everything he really needed, though maybe not all he wanted, and that when he grew up he would have to make the choice for himself about what to do with his money and the issue of war.

It was hard to be confronted by friends and family who thought I was wrong not to pay taxes. They felt good about the good things their taxes were supporting—education, roads, social services—and felt I

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