

IF YOU WORK
FOR PEACE



STOP PAYING
FOR WAR.

More than a paycheck

NEWS FROM THE WAR TAX RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

April 2006

HISTORIAN FOR PEACE

An Interview with Howard Zinn

By Susan Van Haitsma and
Ansel Herz

Howard Zinn was interviewed on February 17, 2006 by Ansel Herz and Susan Van Haitsma while he was in Austin as keynote speaker for the inaugural conference of Historians Against the War.

SVH: I'm really grateful for the ways you've supported war tax resistance—for example, signing the Appeal to Conscience circulated by NWTRCC in 2003. I wondered if you've ever done war tax resistance, and if not, why you haven't.

HZ: No, I never have—except, during the Vietnam War, I think I didn't pay my telephone tax—a very minor act of war tax resistance. But, why not—I don't know — guess I didn't think enough about it. Maybe I didn't have people close to me who were doing it and therefore giving me

some community to be part of. I was too busy doing other things. So, I have no good reason!

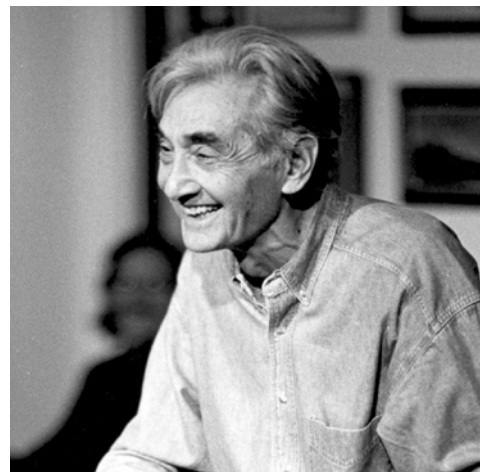
SVH: Would you still consider doing it at some point?

HZ: I might consider doing it at some point.

SVH: Since the military budget is so huge, with almost incomprehensible spending on the war and occupation, I would have expected there to be more of a surge in war tax resistance. But, there really hasn't been and I wonder if you have thoughts about why.

HZ: I don't think the actual numbers make a difference. If it's \$400 billion a year or \$500 billion, I don't think people decide to be war tax resisters on that basis. It's not a quantitative thing, it's a qualitative thing. So, I'm not surprised that there hasn't been a surge.

SVH: Would you have advice for war



Howard Zinn.

Photo by Ed Hedeman

tax resisters as a movement?

HZ: I think the important thing is to publicize what is being done, not in the hopes that the movement will become a mass movement, because WTR is not going to become a mass movement. It's the kind of movement that will always involve a relatively small number of people. Most people, even those who are vehemently against the military budget and against militarization are just not inclined to go that far and disrupt their lives. It takes real

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TAX DAY 2006

Outrage Needed!

I don't wear a lot of political buttons - the one with peace in English, Arabic, and Hebrew, and the WRL broken rifle pin are part of my standard attire. I do wear "Don't Pay War Taxes," for demonstrations in particular, although Ruth Clark from North Carolina called some months back and had a journalist stop and ask about her "Ask

Me About War Tax Resistance" button. I'm not sure if it turned into an article or not, but it led to a serious conversation in the grocery store and made me feel stupid for not wearing it myself.

However, I'm thinking maybe the one that declares "WHERE IS THE OUTRAGE," might be more in order these days. I do know that most readers share my outrage at the war, the administration, the ongoing scandalous use of U.S. tax dollars for war and are acting on their outrage. But, it would appear from the notices of tax day events that are trickling in this year that our groups are not experiencing a real

upswing in activity. Most of the reports below are of leafleting at the post office, a worthy activity not to be denigrated. Still, we usually see a few more actions with street theatre or a civil disobedience component (beyond the usual risk of arrest for leafleting on public property!). On the other hand, it could be that many are focused on plans for the third anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, the time of the deadline for this issue.

In New York we've been doing once-a-month solemn walks, carrying coffin

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**IF YOU WORK
FOR PEACE**



More than a paycheck

Editor

Ruth Benn

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Susan Quinlan

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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.

Subscriptions to *More Than a Paycheck* are \$15 per year.

NWTRCC

P.O. Box 150553
Brooklyn, NY 11215
(718) 768-3420
(800) 269-7464
FAX: (718) 768-4388

email: nwtrcc@nwtrcc.org
Web: www.nwtrcc.org

COUNSELING NOTES

Maintaining Fear

As we know, fear of the IRS is key to their collection efforts, and IRS press releases and announcements are full of proclamations about how their audits, collections, and enforcement efforts are improving — “so many percentage points higher than the previous period.” To make sure that reality is included in the mix, the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), based at Syracuse University, has provided the public with detailed information about the operation of hundreds of federal agencies since 1989, including the IRS. NWTRCC has referred to their excellent reports in the past.

TRAC has used the IRS's own data to produce a regular series of authoritative reports about the actual performance of what is today one of the nation's largest and most powerful agencies, and the reports are posted on TRAC's web site, <http://trac.syr.edu>. But, in January 2006, TRAC announced it was suing the IRS for withholding its tax enforcement statistics since mid-2004, in violation of a 1976 court order that forced them to release detailed statistics about how the agency enforces the nation's tax laws. TRAC has used the data to show that poor people were being audited at a higher rate than rich people (2000) and that corporate audits were down (2004 and 2005), and other such facts not announced by the IRS. More information about the lawsuit is on TRAC's website.

Current data of interest to WTR's produced by TRAC shows a marked increase in levies and liens between 2000 and 2004, data that matches experience, at least in terms of calls about bank account

and salary levies. While neither levies nor liens are reaching the levels prior to the 1998 Congressional hearings on the IRS, levies in particular have been on a steep climb back up. Seizures, however, dropped dramatically in 1999 and have shown little increase since then.

Year	Levies	Liens	Seizures
1997	3,659,417	543,613	10,090
1999	504,403	167,867	161
2001	674,080	426,166	234
2003	1,680,844	544,316	399
2004	2,029,613	534,392	440.

See <http://trac.syr.edu/tracirs/latest/current>, for full chart and graphs. ▼

Outrage Needed

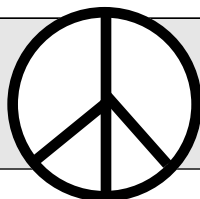
Continued from page 1

replicas to recruiting centers with our “stop the war” signs, trying to make visible the costs of the war. We'll probably do that kind of action on April 15, walking between the Manhattan IRS office and the main post office. Portland, Oregon, folks will be holding war tax related “Burma shave” signs on bridges around the city on tax day. In Fort Collins, Colorado, they're going to hand out pieces of pie to “take back the pie chart.” Milwaukee activists will carry on their tradition of risking arrest while taking their message directly to their Senator's office and to the IRS office.

Hundreds of others around the country, whether two-by-two or in large groups, will be out handing out thousands of the WRL pie

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Many Thanks



We are grateful for the recent contributions and affiliate fees from these groups:

Taxes for Peace Not War!
Eugene, OR

Oregon Community for War
Tax Resistance, Portland

Casa Maria/Milwaukee War
Tax Resistance

Quaker City Friends
Meeting (NH)

Network Updates

Central Region: Change Donald Kaufman's email to: dkaufman@cox.net

New England Region: Add - New Hampshire, Tom Jackson, Dover, NH, (603) 498-3580, coffeeanon@yahoo.com, Area contact

New Counselors from the October training:

Oregon: Ann Huntwork, Portland, (503) 281-4970; John and Pat Schwiebert, Portland, (503) 281-3697, Email: john@tearsoup.com, Email: pat@tearsoup.com

California: Doug Mackenzie, Los Gatos, (408) 458-6788, ddmackenzie@gmail.com

Northeast: Carol Wald, Brooklyn, (718) 638-2349, Email: screwtheright@verizon.net, and Veronica Fellerath, Bay Shore, (631) 665-7444, Email: vmfny@aol.com

Imprisoned for War Tax Refusal

On February 21, Joe Donato reported to the Federal Correctional Institution in Fairton, New Jersey, to begin a 27-month prison sentence for following his religious beliefs against paying taxes for military purposes. Likewise, Kevin McKee began his 24-month sentence on February 13 at FPC Schuylkill in Minersville, Pennsylvania. Joe and Kevin, along with Joe's wife Inge, were convicted by a jury in federal court in Camden, New Jersey, in December 2004 on charges of "conspiring to defraud the United States" and "willful evasion" of federal taxes. Inge Donato completed her 6-month prison term on February 6.

The Donatos and McKee are members of the Restored Israel of Yahweh, a small Bible study-based religious society located in Mays Landing, New Jersey. Their founder, Leo J. Volpe, was a World War II draft refuser who left the Jehovah's Witnesses to teach a gospel of pacifism that included refusal to partici-

pate financially in the military.

We would always have gladly paid our full share of taxes if only the government could assure us that the amount we paid would not go to fund war making," said Joe Donato. "The lack of any provision like that forced us to either violate our religion or risk being branded as criminals. At that point, we saw no choice but to honor our beliefs."

"I am deeply saddened that these gentle folks wound up being the first pacifist tax resisters to be prosecuted and jailed—possibly ever—for felony conspiracy to defraud the U.S. and attempted tax evasion, the most serious criminal charges in the Internal Revenue Code," said Peter Goldberger, Inge Donato's attorney. "The IRS has plenty of power to collect taxes without resorting to criminal prosecution. I look to our government to show more respect for sincere expressions of religious beliefs."

—National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund. For the full release and more information on what you can do see www.peacetaxfund.org.



Inge and Joe Donato

PLEASE WRITE TO JOE AND KEVIN:

Joseph Donato, # 40884-050, FCI Fairton- Satellite camp, PO Box 420, Fairton NJ, 08320

Kevin McKee, # 40886-050, FPC Schuylkill, PO Box 700, Minersville, PA, 17954-0670

War Tax —Responsibility— Peace Tax

*Eleventh International Conference
on War Tax Resistance and Peace Tax
Campaigns*

October, 26 - 29, 2006

Woltersdorf (near Berlin)

Organized by Netzwerk Friedenssteuer
The costs for accommodation and food are
about 95 EUR.

Information: www.peacetax-2006.com
or contact Friedrich Heilmann,
Seestr. 21 D -15537, Erkner,
Germany, Phone: +49-3362-503071,
e-mail: infos@peacetax-2006.com

International Notes

BOLIVIA

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights heard the case of Alfredo Dias Bustos, a Jehovah's Witness requesting conscientious objector (CO) status in Bolivia. He also requested as a CO that he should not be required to pay the military tax which Bolivia, along with many other states, levies on men who do not perform their military service. The State and the Commission came to a friendly agreement on October 27, 2005, that granted Bustos relief on both counts. (The full agreement is at www.cidh.org/annualrep/2005eng/bolivia14.04eng.htm.) This may be the first time that such direct substitution of finan-

cial conscription for bodily conscription has been accepted in an international court!

CANADA

Conscience Canada has developed their own version of the Peace Tax Return, available on their website, <http://www.consciencecanada.ca>, in English and French. "Hopefully, our right-wing newly elected government will get the message in large numbers!" says Marilyn Hébert of Conscience Canada and *Nos Impôts Pour la Paix*.

From *Conscience and Military Tax Campaign (CPTI)* ▼

Outrage Needed

Continued from page 2

chart or similar flyers. Will getting this

information into the hands of taxpayers build the outrage? We hope so!

—Ruth Benn, NWTRCC Coordinator

*This list will be updated right up to April 17
on the NWTRCC website (www.nwtrcc.org/*

taxday2006.htm), so if your event is not below or if all the information isn't there, be sure to get it to the NWTRCC office as soon as possible, 1-800-269-7464 or nwtrcc@nwtrcc.org. ▼

Tax Day events are Monday, April 17,
Continued on page 5

RESOURCES

Updated Brochure

The NWTRCC office has in stock a new version of the popular brochure, "Why Isn't Everyone Who's for Peace a War Tax Resister," which gives brief answers to 18 common questions dealing with fear, financial, philosophical and political, and technical issues. Single copies are free or 12¢ each plus postage for more. A simple flyer version is also downloadable as a PDF from the NWTRCC website publications page, <http://www.nwtrcc.org/publications.htm#books>.

Buttons!

\$1 each (or call about bulk rates)

1" button: Thoreau image with text: "Don't Pay War Taxes"

2" buttons (black text on various background colors):

"Ask Me About Resisting War Taxes," "Let them march all they want as long as they pay their taxes—Alexander Haig," "Consider . . . War Tax Resistance," "Don't Pay War Taxes" and others. If you have a favorite WTR slogan that you would like to see on a button, let NWTRCC know and we'll pass it on to our friendly button makers.

Brochures and buttons available from NWTRCC, 1-800-269-7464 or nwtrcc@nwtrcc.org.

Ask Phone Tax Questions Online

A forum has been added to the Hang Up On War website. Suggested at the Strategy Conference in October, the forum is now "open to the public" at www.hanguponwar.org/forum or linked for the HUOW homepage. It is open for questions about phone tax, to post information about dealing with a particular company, or to have discussion about the ins and outs of phone tax resistance. Logon today!

War Tax Resistance

2006 Tax Day Plans

unless otherwise noted.

ARIZONA

Tucson – Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Local Chapter. (520) 312-9988 or susan@susanthorpe.com or www.wilpftucson.org. Leafleting at the Sun Station Post Office, 9 am-5 pm, and, at the main Post Office, Cherry Bell Station, 5 pm-Midnight.

CALIFORNIA

Chico – Chico Peace and Justice Center. (530) 345-7590 or chris4pax@chico.com. Penny poll and leaflet at downtown Post Office, Broadway and 5th Streets.

Sonoma County – Sonoma County Taxes for Peace. (707) 823-9203. Leafleting at three post offices in the county.

COLORADO

Fort Collins – Center for Justice, Peace & Environment. (970) 484-8039 or strengththroughpeace@yahoo.com. Penny poll and leafleting while handing out pieces of pie to "take back the pie chart."



Carol Moore, Tax Day 2004, Washington, DC.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Washington – DC Area War Tax Resistance. info@dcwtr.org. Vigil and redistribution of resisted tax money at IRS Headquarters, 1111 Constitution NW. Noon.

FLORIDA

St. Petersburg – Leafleting at one or more neighborhood post offices, 11 am-3 pm. Contact: Ruth Paine, (727) 895-3090, rhypaine@yahoo.com.

IOWA

Dubuque – Citizens' Tax Moratorium. (563) 583-2586. Tax day vigil and leafleting at U.S. Courthouse, 6th and Locust, 5-7 pm. Anti-war vigil every Friday morning 8-8:30 am, U.S. Highway 20 and South Locust near bridge to Illinois.

MAINE

(April 17 is a holiday; actions April 18)

Bangor, Belfast, Portland (probably other towns too) – Maine War Tax Resistance Resource Center. (207) 525-7776 or invert@acadia.net. Bangor: Post office and Federal Building, Harlow St., Noon-6 pm, leafleting and penny poll, followed by a showing at 6 pm of "An Act of Conscience" at location tba. Belfast: 11:30 am-1 pm and other times, Post Office. Portland: Leafleting at main Post Office, 125 Forest Avenue, time TBA.

Brunswick — Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space. (207) 729-0517 or globalnet@mindspring.com. Protest and leafleting. 11 am-1 pm.

MICHIGAN

Jackson — War tax resistance history exhibit will be displayed at Jackson Community College leading up to tax day. Penny poll. April 15 - Leafleting at Jackson Post Office. Contact: Alan Gamble, (517) 740-8363 or alan_gamble@jccmi.edu.

MINNESOTA

International Falls – Penny poll at Post Office, library, and Court House during the days leading up to tax day. Details to be announced. Contact: Ruth Anderson, (218) 286-5819.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Peace Ideas & Actions

Portsmouth — Info: Maine War Tax Resistance Resource Center. (207) 525-7776 or invert@acadia.net. Leafleting at main Post Office, 80 Daniel St., time tba.

NEW MEXICO

Albuquerque — Albuquerque War Tax Alternative Fund. (505) 247-2788. Leafleting with the pie chart and telephone tax resistance forms at the Post Office.

NEW YORK

New York City — NYC War Resisters League (nycwrl@att.net, 718-768-7306) and NYC War Tax Resistance, www.nycplf.org. April 15 — Solemn procession mourning the use of tax dollars for war between IRS and post office (8th Ave and 34th St.). April 17: Leafleting and vigil at Manhattan IRS office (110 W. 44th Street, just west of Sixth Ave.) from noon-2 pm.

NORTH CAROLINA

Asheville — Fools of Conscience. wncpc@main.nc.us. Leafleting at the Downtown Post Office, Saturday April 15. Time tba.

OREGON

Portland — Oregon Community for War Tax Resistance/WRL. (503) 238-0605 or jgrueschow@comcast.net. April 14: Holding "Burma Shave" signs on the local bridges during morning and evening rush hours. April 17: Redirection ceremony and penny poll at downtown post office. Time tba.

TEXAS

Austin — Austin Conscientious Objectors to Military Taxation. (512) 467-2946 or jeffweb@sbcglobal.net. Leafleting at Central Post Office with "Where Your Income Taxes Really Go" flyer. Late afternoon.

San Antonio — Leafleting with pie chart

at weekly peace vigil, Thursdays 4-5 pm, downtown at the main plaza (officially Plaza de Las Islas) on the Northeast corner (Main Plaza and Commerce Sts.) Contact: valliv-eoak@juno.com.



Felice Cohen-Joppa staffs the penny poll at the Tucson Peace Fair.
Photo by Jack Cohen-Joppa.

WASHINGTON

Seattle — Nonviolent Action Community of Cascadia (NACC) and other groups. (206) 547-0952 or nacc@drizzle.com or <http://seanacc.org>. Leafleting with "Where Your Income Taxes Really Go" flyers at Seattle post offices. Call for locations and times.

Tacoma — Leafleting of the WRL pie chart at the Main Post Office in Tacoma, 8 pm - ?. Contact: George Rodkey, (253) 961-5822 or georod01@msn.com.

WISCONSIN

Madison — Madison Area War Tax Resistance. 608-255-1800 or jerry@lakesidepress.org. Public distribution of resisted tax dollars with location and time tba.

Madison — Madison Branch of WILPF and Health Writers, (608) 238-5740 or lz14@juno.com. Leaflet at the Post Office on Tax Day to educate filers on where their tax money goes.

RESOURCES CONT.

What Belongs to Caesar?

A new edition of this book subtitled *A Discussion on the Christian's Response to Payment of War Taxes* by Donald D. Kaufman, first published in 1970, is now available in a quality reprint edition from Wipf and Stock Publishers, Inc., 199 West 8th Ave., Suite 3, Eugene, OR 97401, for \$17. Donald Kaufman is active with the Mennonite Central Committee and the Heartland Peace Tax Fund in Kansas. For more information on the book, see www.wipfandstock.com, or order by telephone (541) 344-1528 or via email: orders@wipfandstock.com.

Cost of War

National Priorities Project is an excellent source for budget information, and their newest publication is *Cost of Iraq War Rises*, with local and state taxpayer costs of the Iraq War.

To find information for your city, county, or state, or obtain additional analysis of the administration request, go to www.nationalpriorities.org/iraqwarcost, or contact: NPP, 17 New South St., Northampton, MA 01060, (413) 584-9556.

New WTR Poster Series

The SF Print Collective has produced a series of hand printed silk screen color posters highlighting a variety of creative WTR messages and images. Check the NWTRCC web page for more information about purchasing one or a complete set. ▼



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NWTRCC Spring Gathering

Ways We Resist

*A weekend gathering
to strengthen our resistance*

May 5 - 7, 2006

University Friends Meeting,
4001 9th Ave. NE,
near the University of Washington.
Seattle, Washington

Hosted by the Nonviolent Action Community of Cascadia, the gathering will begin with dinner on Friday. Friday evening features "A Conversation with Father Roy Bourgeois" of School of the Americas Watch. Saturday's panels and workshops will include hearing from people who resist in different ways, such as counter-recruitment activists, living in intentional communities, and putting one's body on the line to protest nuclear weapons. We'll talk about the shared concerns of war tax resisters in terms of outreach, consequences, fears, etc. NWTRCC's Coordinating Committee business meeting will be Sunday morning. All welcome! The registration form is on the NWTRCC website, www.nwtrcc.org, click on "Programs and Gatherings," or contact the office if you would like a brochure mailed to you, 1-800-269-7464. ▼

War Tax Tablers Out and About

NWTRCC shared a table with the Peace Tax Fund at the National Conference on Organized Resistance in Washington, DC, at the beginning of February. This annual conference at American University draws hundreds of students and young activists and is a good place for WTRs to present workshops also. Put it on your calendar for next winter! ▼

Howard Zinn

Continued from page 1

commitment to do that. So, without expecting other people to do the same, the important thing is to let people know who is doing it. Even if persons don't want to do WTR themselves, I think it is inspirational for them to see other people doing it.

I have faced the same issue with my Catholic anti-war friends—the Berrigans and Elizabeth McAllister and those people, and they do very daring things that will get them prison sentences, and most people will not do that. And I will not do that, although I've been jailed 10 times in the course of demonstrations and so on. But, I would not deliberately put myself in a position of going to jail for several years, and it's the same sort of situation where the people who do it are an inspiration to other people. And it's important for the people who do it not to make other people feel guilty, not to make them feel that somehow there's something lacking in them if they don't go that far. The practicality is that most people will not go that far, but they may go in another direction or they may do other things.

And they may do other things because, at least partly, they've been admiring of those people who do go that far.

AH: The third anniversary of the February 15 worldwide protest just passed. I wondered what you thought was effective and what was ineffective about that protest.

HZ: Well, it was a historic act ... it gave some indication how people all over the world were opposed to the impending invasion of Iraq ... there's never been anything like it ... simultaneous demonstrations of 10-15 million people.

And, I think we probably expected too much from it. We're dealing with a presidency, an administration which has built a steel wall around itself against world public opinion and American public opinion, and so far, the demonstrations have not affected public policy. I think, at some point, they will.

But, I think the administration, if it's moved away from present policy, will be moved by something much closer to home, and that is the inability to carry on the war because of resistance here at home—people angry at the uses of our wealth, angry at the diminution of health care and education and student loans—and, more important even, as a factor in causing the administration ultimately to decide to get out of Iraq, the inability to maintain an army that has the morale to stick it out. I think if there is a weak point in this steel-clad armored administration in carrying on the war, it is that.

SVH: I also see a lot of hope in the counter-recruitment movement, with students saying "no," and I wondered if you also feel hopefulness about this.



Youth activists of Austin demonstrate in front of school district headquarters

HZ: Oh, yes, I think that the movement against military recruiting in the high schools is a very important part of the movement because the government has been desperate about recruiting young people.

Continued on page 7

LOCAL GROUP REPORTS

Tax Day Actions

Continued from page 5

Milwaukee – Milwaukee War Tax Resistance and Casa Maria Catholic Worker. (414) 344-5745. IRS offices, Federal Plaza, 3rd and Wisconsin Ave. Vigiling outside for an hour with signs and flyers, deliver letter to Senator Herb Kohl in his office, civil disobedience at tax office. Noon.

Contact the NWTRCC office, (800) 269-7464 or nwtrcc@nwtrcc.org, if you need further contact information for a local group. ▼



Alan Clemence leafleting outside the post office in Bangor, ME, April 15, 2005. Photo by Larry Dansinger.

Howard Zinn

Continued from page 6

SVH: I wanted to share with you this photo of a recent demonstration organized by Youth Activists of Austin held in front of our school district headquarters as part of our joint campaign calling for a district policy limiting recruiter access in the schools...

HZ: "Better Well-Read Than Dead." Yes, that's good! I may refer to it in my talk tonight.... [and he did!—to applause].

AH: I know that you're interested in anarchism and you wrote a play about Emma Goldman. I'm sort of an anarchist and I was wondering if you see a greater role for anarchism in the U.S. in the future.

HZ: I think that's the only direction in which we can go if we are going to create a better society – without calling it anarchism. The great thing about anarchism is that the idea of anarchism pervades so many people's minds and so many things people do who don't consider themselves anarchists. Anarchism gives the fundamental idea of

being suspicious of authority and wanting people to have direct control over their lives—that is something that is a very strong impulse in people, and people have been struggling to make that impulse real. Of course, the government and corporations have been struggling against that impulse, but I think it will always be there because it speaks most closely to people's natural desires and natural needs.

SVH: Do you think there will be a time when this country will stop using our youngest adults in war?

HZ: Do I think there will be a time when we will renounce war as a way of solving problems? I think that time must come – I don't know how soon. I think there will be a point reached where war will be seen not just as immoral but as impractical, and the morality and practicality will join – the two motives will join and create a situation where governments won't be able to carry on a war because – Iraq is an example of it – it becomes more and more clear that war doesn't even achieve the objectives of the people who initiate it. And so, I'm hopeful about that.

Howard Zinn is an historian, speaker, writer, and author of many books, among them

November 1979-IRS

Dear Computer:

Yes, you're just a computer
Just like the ones that direct nuclear
warheads
You have no heart or hands or eyes or
feelings
You don't see destruction or civilian
casualties
You don't feel the agony of death and
suffering
No, you're just programmed to get
more dollars
Dollars to build bigger bombs and feed
the military mania
Dollars to build more nuclear weapons
every day
Dollars to bring destruction to the
whole world
Dollars to bring hell on earth
Don't expect me to pay for that
I sent my [money] to Mennonite
Central Committee
I want to help build a better peaceful
world
I want to be a faithful follower of Jesus
Jesus even said, "Love your enemies"
Unfortunately, computer, you're not
alone
The whole U.S. Government buys
your inhuman logic
Legislators, Administrators, Judges all
say I must pay for war
But I'm a Christian conscientious
objector to war
So I wonder, are they all computers,
too?

For humanity,
James Klassen
Austin, Texas

A Peoples History of the United States and You Can't Be Neutral On A Moving Train, which is also the title of a 2005 film about him.

Ansel Herz is a journalism student at the University of Texas at Austin and is active with Youth Activists of Austin.

Susan Van Haitsma is active with Austin Conscientious Objectors to Military Taxation and Nonmilitary Options for Youth. ▼

Letter to the Internal Revenue Service

April 2005

Dear Fellow Human Being,

Enclosed you will find my tax returns for the 2004 tax year, and my payment voucher. You will notice that I have not included payment.... It was a really hard decision for me, and now I am going on faith that there is actually a person at the other end of this letter, someone who feels things, maybe felt the sun today, or noticed the grass getting steadily greener as the spring deepens.

... in my heart, I cannot honor the demands of the Internal Revenue Service of the United States of America. Because, you see, at some point, I do actually believe that it IS up to me. It is up to all of us who have a conscience, who feel the tug of some Deeper Meaning for Being Here -- to listen to the tender dreams and dare to question what is impersonal and impenetrable. So, rather than honor the demands of an institution whose authority I can no longer recognize, I will honor the call of my heart. I will honor the cry of the poor, the pleas of those we have bombed, the tears of children and mothers, the moans of the slaughtered men in Fallujah, the fear of the soldiers who return under cover of night to the U.S. because they are wounded and the media doesn't report those stories. I will honor the future generations of the land we call Iraq, whose blood and bones and soil and water will be contaminated with Depleted Uranium from our weapons for more time than we can fathom....

I recently spent one month in Australia with an amazing group of people from all over the world who are dedicating their lives to serving Life, ministering to the magical unfolding of Creation, its miracle and mystery....

When I came back to the United States, the first newspaper I picked up in my town spoke of Congress approving billions of dollars for more funding for the war effort in Iraq. On the same front page, there was a picture of children from my town, with a headline declaring that childcare services would have to be cut at a federally funded childcare site. There just wasn't enough money.

I know you know as well as I do: there is SO MUCH money. There just isn't enough to pay for endless, illegitimate, illegal, unjust wars AND care for our children, not to mention pay for education and

healthcare. If our government can't make what seems like the obvious choice here, then the IRS has lost its mandate to demand any money from me.

I will henceforth be solely responsible for where my money goes. I will voluntarily tithe myself, because I long to live in a society that cares for each other and I believe that starts with me. I will send half of what I tithe to the Social Security Administration, because I believe wholeheartedly in a culture that cares for those who cannot care for themselves, and social insurance is an evolutionary triumph for ordinary people here in the United States. The same people who lied about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq (while developing new nuclear weapons here) are lying to us about Social Security. So I will gladly and joyfully stand in opposition to such a cold-hearted attempt to steal security from those who need it. Next, I will send annual donations to a Veterans hospital of my choosing, since the U.S. government does not seem to care very much for its soldiers once they can no longer fight. Third, I will send money to both the Post Office and the Public Library in my town, because I believe the free exchange of information and ideas is of crucial importance. Fourth, I will continue to support the Ithaca

Health Fund, which is a community fund of money for health care, since the

U.S. government does not consider the health of its (non rich) citizens to be a top priority. Finally, I will strive every day of my life to live lightly and lovingly on this beautiful, bountiful Earth. I will share what I have been given, care for elders, and teach children to respect the mysterious unseen things that make our lives possible, like the ozone layer, ocean plankton, whatever it is inside seeds that makes them sprout and grow, and the microbes in good, clean soil. I will ride my bike, rather than own a car. I will support what is small and local. I will vote every minute with my body, my heart, my spirit, my money, my work, my play, my food, my smile, my tears, my life—for a country that has the courage to tell the truth.

May you be blessed, and may you get home soon,

Rebecca Nellenback, Ithaca, NY ▼



**IF YOU WORK
FOR PEACE**



NWTRCC

P.O. Box 150553
Brooklyn, NY 11215
(800)269-7464
(718) 768-3420

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