

IF YOU WORK
FOR PEACE



STOP PAYING
FOR WAR.

More than a paycheck

NEWS FROM THE WAR TAX RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

June 2009

Paint It, Sew It, Hold It, Hang It Tax Day 2009

Every year on or near tax day war tax resisters/refusers/peace tax campaigners take our message directly to people. We have never counted on the media to give us serious coverage. This year journalists of all stripes got caught up in the Fox TV generated excitement of the Tax Day “tea bag” protests, but the ever-hardy folks in the NWRCC network were out in towns and cities across the country and their messages were clear:



Patty and Jeff at the post office in Austin, TX. Photo by Susan Van Haisma.



Tucson, AZ. Photo by Felice Cohen-Joppa.



Asheville (NC) Area War Tax Resisters pose after their action.



Royal Oak, MI. Photo by Jon Pickel.



Pat Huhn stationed outside the post office in Colorado Springs, CO. Photo by Donna Johnson.

See more pictures and stories and links to media coverage and blogs at nwrcc.org.

Tax Day 2009
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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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Don't Forget to Read!

All of us are busy, and sometimes we forget that the answer to our question might actually be right there in a book on our bookshelf or in a pamphlet under the pile of papers on our desks. Others of us rush to the computer for an internet answer, and war tax resisters should become familiar with the information on the NWTRCC website, along with the links to other war tax websites. You can read all of the "Practical War Tax Resistance" series or order copies of all of our resources from the Publications page. If you are listed as a counselor or contact and do not have copies of basic WTR resources, please call the NWTRCC office (800-269-7464), and we'll get you some samples.

This is not to discourage you from calling the NWTRCC office, especially with sticky questions and information about direct contact from IRS agents. It is important for the office to have information about the types of problems facing war tax resisters. In addition, please let us know when you run into outdated information on our website or in our print materials and if you have ideas for new materials that would help in your counseling, workshops, or outreach.

Another way to add to your knowledge is to invite a NWTRCC speaker to your area. See the new War Tax Resistance Speakers Bureau at nwtrcc.org. Pictures, bios, and contact information are at your finger tips!

Failure-to-File/Failure-to-Pay Penalties

The IRS puts out regular tax tips, and a recent one summed up some penalties that come up in WTR counseling. Per above, this information can

also be found in some of our practical series booklets and in the book *War Tax Resistance*. People thinking about refusing war taxes worry about these penalties, but it's important to remind them, assuming the IRS catches up, that thousands of people are paying a higher price for U.S. militarism.

- The penalty for failure-to-file is usually 5 percent of the unpaid taxes for each month or part of a month that a return is late. This penalty will not exceed 25 percent of the taxpayer's unpaid taxes. If you file your return more than 60 days after the due date, the minimum penalty is \$135 or, if less, 100 percent of the tax on your return.

- The failure-to-pay penalty is 1/2 of 1 percent of your unpaid taxes for each month or part of a month after the due date that the taxes are not paid. The failure-to-pay penalty rate increases to a full 1 percent per month for any tax that remains unpaid the day after a demand for immediate payment is issued, or 10 days after notice of intent to levy certain assets is issued.

- If both the failure-to-file penalty and the failure-to-pay penalty apply in any month, the 5 percent failure-to-file penalty is reduced by the failure-to-pay penalty. However, if a return is filed more than 60 days after the due date or extended due date, the minimum penalty is \$135 or, if less, 100 percent of the unpaid tax.

Frivolous Tax Return Penalty

According to IRS memo FS-2008-19, March 2008:

You may have to pay a penalty of \$5,000 if you file a frivolous tax return or other frivolous submissions. If you jointly file a frivolous tax return with your spouse, both you and your spouse each may have to pay a penalty of \$5,000. A frivolous tax return is one that does not include enough information to figure the correct tax or that con-

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Many Thanks



Network Updates

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

Madison (WI) Area Alternative Fund

Michiana War Tax Refusers

Milwaukee WTR/Casa Maria

New York City People's Life Fund

Northern CA People's Life Fund

Southern CA War Tax Alternative Fund

War Resisters League National Office

NWTRCC's list of war tax resistance counselors, area contacts, affiliates, and alternative funds and updates to that list 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.

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.

Active Committees in the NWTRCC network are: War Tax Boycott; Introductory Film; Fundraising; and the Young Adult Review Committee. Let us know if you are interested in joining any of these committees. Volunteers are always welcome!

Next International Conference NWTRCC Rep Nominations

The 13th International Conference on War Tax Resistance and Peace Tax Campaigns will be held July 2–4, 2010, in Sandefjord, Norway, at the Skiringssal boarding school. Sandefjord is about 110 kms southwest of Oslo. The conference hosts are active with The Peace Tax Alliance in Norway, and planning is just getting underway.

NWTRCC sends a representative to each international conference and covers their registration, room and board, and travel up to \$1,000. Representatives are expected to present a NWTRCC report to the conference, might facilitate a workshop or participate in a panel, and must write a report for our newsletter and the following NWTRCC meeting. We will choose our delegate at the November 2009 Coordinating Committee meeting so that there is plenty of time to make travel arrangements.

If you are interested in applying, please send a short write up (mail or email) to the NWTRCC office describing your interest in going, your willingness to fulfill the tasks mentioned, and anything else you think relevant. Deadline is September 21, 2009.

Counseling Notes

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tains information clearly showing that the tax you reported is substantially incorrect. You will have to pay the penalty if you filed this kind of return or submission based on a frivolous position or a desire to delay or interfere with the administration of federal tax laws. This includes altering or striking out the preprinted language above the space provided for your signature. This penalty is added to any other penalty provided by law.

Last year when a WTR couple were slapped with \$5,000 each (later lifted) for their joint return that enclosed a letter of protest and a \$50 resistance, many of us were surprised both were penalized for the one return. This language from the IRS makes it clear that a joint return can incur two penalties. However, it is also fairly clear that the penalty applies when the “tax you reported is substantially incorrect.” Enclosing a letter is not enough to invite a frivolous penalty—although not all IRS workers understand this distinction. ▼

Peace Tax Seven Case Refused

By Simon Heywood

The European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg has refused to consider the Peace Tax Seven’s application for a judicial review of British law relating to military taxation under the European Convention on Human Rights. The Court’s refusal is not subject to appeal and brings the Peace Tax Seven’s current legal campaign to an end.

Lawyers acting for the group received a short letter from the Court, dated 24th February, stating that the application “did not disclose any appearance of a violation of the rights and freedoms set out in the Convention.” The letter did not go into further detail except to state that the decision was made with reference to Articles 34 and 35 of the Convention. Among other things, Article 35 states that the Court “shall not deal with any application submitted under Article 34 that ... is substantially the same as a matter that has already been examined by the Court.” It therefore seems that the Court is upholding its own previous refusal to consider the issue. The most pivotal decisions date from the height of the Cold War and are now over 20 years old.

We are deeply disappointed that the Court has disregarded the positive comments of British courts made in referring the case to Strasbourg; failed to consider the arguments; or even given a full and clear explanation of

its refusal to do so. We are, of course, frustrated with the apparent lack of regard shown for 20 years of change and development in international law as regards the issue of conscientious objection, including recent developments such as the Luarca Declaration. We have no further recourse to law, we remain in exactly the same dilemma of conscience as in 2002 and we therefore have no further option but to continue to challenge the law. The Court’s decision plays into the hands of those who—unlike us—argue that effective campaigning requires a disregard for the law of the land. We do not believe that it should or need do so.

We remain committed to working for a change in the law and all other legitimate means to creating a world in which taxpayers’ money is spent on creating peace by addressing the underlying causes of war, rather than neglecting the underlying issues in order to prolong the cycles of violence. Along with our many friends and supporters, we are considering the next stage of the campaign and remain determined to continue our struggle to ensure our taxes are used for peace not war. We would like to thank all of our many friends for their help and support over the last five years, and we look forward to continuing to work with them in this vitally important cause.

Simon Heywood is the Press Officer for the Peace Tax Seven, and this article appeared in their March newsletter. For more information see their website peacetaxseven.com or email them at info@peacetaxseven.com. ▼



The Peace Tax Seven: (back l to r) Brenda Boughton, Birgit Vollm, Siân Cwper, lawyer Phil Shiner, Joe Jenkins. (Front row l to r) Simon Heywood, Robin Brookes, legal assistant, Roy Prockter. Photo courtesy of The Peace Tax Seven.

WTR Ideas and Actions

Tax Day 2009

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Eugene, OR

The Taxes for Peace Not War group decided not to facilitate activities on Tax Day, but a small group of us combined informally and more or less at the last minute, and we got sponsorship from Eugene's major peace groups: Community Alliance for Lane County, Women's Action for New Directions, and Eugene Peaceworks (an affiliate of WRL).

We spent three hours in the early afternoon at the downtown post office, with our annual penny poll and leafleting of WRL tax pies. At 4:00 pm we formed a small procession, led by a drummer dressed in black, followed by a huge black cardboard coffin decorated with the names of the "merchants of death" and carried by pall-bearers. They were followed by a large sign declaring "Taxes for Peace Not War," peace flags, and a huge white dove. We walked to the federal building where we joined the weekly vigil and ended with a small but personable "mini-rally." Caity Robertson, just back from a Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation in Palestine, spoke movingly.

John Saemann, who is in his early 90s, called me that evening to inform me that he had gotten hold of some of the WRL fliers and gone out to the Tea Party demonstration. He passed them out in a friendly way and recommends that if they have a similar demonstration next year we take a lot of fliers to hand out. Our coverage was one short paragraph at the end of the front page article in our daily newspaper about the "tea party." Still, I was glad we did the whole thing. It was fun and also moving.

—Peg Morton

Royal Oak, MI

We were in front of the Royal Oak Post Office, a spot that becomes a circus every year with free snacks and a local rock radio caravan blasting its tunes. The traffic managers were there to move along the last-minute 1040 filers, who dropped their tax returns out of their car windows into huge receptacles. There were 40 of us peace demonstrators there, however, to help counteract some of the commercialism and, more important, to get across our message of how their tax dollars were actually going to be spent by this militaristic government. Two of the groups



New York City. The Rude Mechanical Orchestra joined NYC War Resisters League and war tax resisters on a tax day march from the IRS to the post office, passing the recruiting center in Times Square. Photo by Ed Hedemann.



Washington, DC. Bob Auerbach braved the cold and rain to stand in front of IRS headquarters on April 15. Photo by Carol Moore.

that called the action were Huntington Woods Peace Group and Women in Black.

—Suzanne Antisdell

Santa Rosa, CA

This is our second year doing a "Penny Poll" at Friends House, my retirement community here in Santa Rosa. This year we set it up at lunchtime and at teatime. It proved quite popular, with 40 people taking pennies to distribute. The Health Care jar was filled to the top.

—Ruth Hyde Paine

Austin Conscientious Objectors to Military Taxation and CodePink, Austin, TX

While about 1,500 tea-baggers rallied and marched in Austin carrying signs with messages such as "I'll keep my money and guns; you can keep the change," 11 of us taxpayers and tax resisters-for-peace posted ourselves at the downtown post office, as is our custom, holding signs reminding folks about the large elephant being ignored at the tea party: the huge costs associated with those guns. Many tax filers nodded in agreement with the posters we held. Earlier in the day, I gave a brief interview about war tax resistance on Austin's cooperative radio station.

—Susan Van Haitsma

Oregon Community of War Tax Resisters, Portland, OR

We held a public redirection on April 11 at the central library and gave our redirected tax money to the Bridge Fund and the Voz day labor center. On Tax Day we held our "Burma

Shave" message signs and our banner on the Burnside bridge and the Morrison Bridge where hundreds of cars pass by at rush hour. I spoke to a class at Portland State University and found that the trouble with talking about war tax resistance as conscientious objection is that most if not all of those students are on student loans. Some said they expect to graduate with at least a \$50,000 debt. Media-wise we had one half-hour (before the Saturday event) and a separate 5 minute interview on KBOO after the Bridge events, with different voices each time.

—Pam Allee

Chicago

This tax day we war and war tax resisters were overwhelmed in Federal Plaza by patriots, Republicans, and tax-collection reformers, against spending on bailouts and anything but war. Although when I got there around 10 am there was one sign saying "Free Palestine," by the time NWTRCC and AFSC people arrived, the number of flags had become uncountable. If Brad Lyttle and WTRs set up the usual PA system, I did not hear it for the "Star Spangled Banner," Beatle songs, and outbursts of applause.

—Joffre Stewart

Milwaukee War Tax Resistance

Six of us passed out literature and held signs at the main post office. Overall, the response from people visiting the post office was very positive. No tea people at our vigil.

—Lincoln Rice

WTR Ideas and Actions



San Francisco, CA. Elizabeth Boardman joins in the vigil and leafleting on April 14 in front of the Herbst Theater where Amy Goodman was speaking on "Standing Up to the Madness." Photo by David Gross.

Michiana War Tax Refusers, South Bend, IN

I quote: "Hundreds of people rallied on the steps of the St. Joseph County Courthouse on Wednesday for a tax day tea party. People drove from all over Michiana to show the federal government they're fed up with excess spending." However, that was not our group. Instead, there were 7 war tax resister people who did the annual vigil at the main post office in shifts from 6–11 pm. We handed out about 300 of the WRL and war tax boycott flyer/palm card. A few people refused the flyer, but most took it in good humor. E-filing continues to result in fewer and fewer "drive-by mailers." Depression from the Bush years and the feeling that "Obama will do it" has caused our numbers to dwindle. We need to convince Rush Limbaugh and Mike Gallagher to publicize our stuff positively. Better still if Obama would really streamline the military and we could stop all this completely.

—Ellyn Stecker

Groups also redirected thousands of dollars to local, regional, and national organizations that work in all of our priority areas—and against war and violence. This year more than \$142,000 was pledged for redirection through the War Tax Boycott.

A more detailed report on alternative funds and redirection, plus more photos, will appear in the August issue. You can find more pictures and stories at nwtrcc.org, along with links to some of the media coverage that we did get. If you have not done it, send NWTRCC your reports, photos, or articles from your local media.

Grant Deadline Extended

The Nonviolent Action Community of Cascadia is seeking grant applications from grassroots groups for activist organizing and education on issues of peace, social justice, and community empowerment. Maximum award amount is \$2,000. Interested groups may download application materials from the website www.seanacc.org, or contact NACC for details at (206)547-0942, nacc@drizzle.com. Application deadline is June 15, 2009, and grants will be awarded by July 31, 2009.

Counting Our Resistance

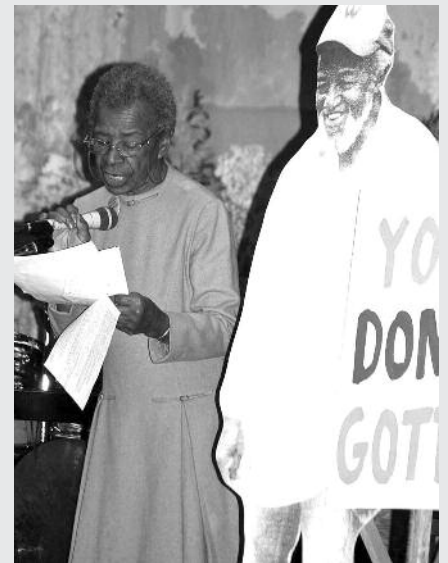
NWTRCC distributed a prototype War Tax Resistance/Refusal Questionnaire to attendees of the May 2009 gathering in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Twenty surveys were handed in during the weekend, and some interesting statistics (from this admittedly small sample) emerged.

Among the survey respondents, the length of any forms of their war tax resistance ranged from 2 to 66 years, with an average of 22.7 years and a median of 19 years.

The survey format did not lend itself to easily calculating the amount of taxes resisted, since respondents could choose to give a range per year and a total amount resisted (some did both a range and a total). However, an estimate could be made. Somewhere around \$450,000 in taxes has been resisted by the 20 respondents, of which only around \$25,000 has been collected by the IRS.

This is definitely a strong point to make to critics who claim that the IRS gets more from resisters in interest and penalties than they originally owed. Even assuming that the sample is not representative, it seems likely that we are keeping more money away from the IRS than they are getting from us.

Respondents were asked to indicate all the methods of war tax resistance and refusal that they use/used. 10 filed and refused to pay, 9 lived below the taxable line, 9 used deductions to get below the taxable income, 5 don't file, and 3 don't pay Social Security taxes.



Juanita Nelson spoke at the "Wally Nelson Centenary Celebration" on March 29 in Greenfield, Massachusetts. A huge crowd turned out for a potluck party and dancing to commemorate the amazing and inspiring life of Wally, an organic farmer, early civil rights worker, practitioner of active nonviolence, and long-time war tax resister who was born in 1909. Wally died in 2002—gone but certainly not forgotten. If you don't know about them, the Nelsons are among the profiles in the book *War Tax Resistance*, for sale from NWTRCC. Photo by Daniel A. Brown.

15 respondents have received letters from the IRS, 9 have had contact with an IRS agent, 5 have had wages/salary garnished, 4 have had bank account levies, and 1 person has been in jail. Several people had state tax refunds or Social Security benefits garnished. 5 people have been audited, and 3 have gotten a frivolous filing penalty.

Consequences experienced by respondents included 4 people quitting their jobs, 6 closed a bank account, 4 live on cash, and 6 hold property in someone else's name.

The positive consequences described by respondents included building community among war tax resisters, having a clear conscience, explaining their convictions to friends and family, having new channels for creativity, and building a more wholesome and financially sound life.

—Erica Weiland

WTR Ideas and Actions continued on page 7

Shenandoah Valley Report

War tax resisters from Seattle to Brunswick, Georgia, converged on the beautiful Shenandoah Valley for the NWTRCC Meeting and Gathering, May 1–3. We were hosted in Harrisonburg, Virginia, by Ray and Wilma Gingerich, who are longtime war tax resisters and members of the Community Mennonite Church where our meetings took place. On Friday evening Jennifer Davis Sensenig, Lead Pastor, officially welcomed the group, and she and other local folks also attended many of our sessions.

We started the program by watching the “Rethinking Afghanistan” short film on the costs of the war. Some found its message to be a good taking off point for discussing war tax resistance. Others thought it led to a mindset that “the war would be ok if the corruption could be controlled.” Our go-round about tax day activities, both group and individual, led into more personal reflections on the challenges and rewards of WTR.

Saturday morning’s sessions revolved around NWTRCC business, including organizational survival in tough economic times. Geov Parrish from Seattle encouraged NWTRCC to keep a broad range of fundraising activities. As part of such an effort, Bill Ramsey pressed everyone to sell the rest of the scarf stock this fall. Ginny Schneider from New Hampshire coordinates the fundraising committee, and plans are to do more donor phone calls and personal appeals to friends.



Erica Weiland fills up her plate when NWTRCC joined the grand opening dinner for Our Community Place, a community center that offers a free lunch and other activities; anyone in the world is welcome to help or participate, ourcommunityplace.org.

A segment of the rough cut of “Death and Taxes,” NWTRCC’s introductory film-in-progress was shown for feedback and ideas on how to proceed. We are grateful to Tucson filmmaker Steev Hise, who has put hours of paid and volunteer time into the production. However, the film is a bit stuck at this point, and the Film Committee is entertaining ideas on how to finish it in time for the coming tax season. Contact the NWTRCC office for more information.

Thanks much to Bethany Criss, the new Executive Director of the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, for joining us on Saturday. She gamely handled some tough questions as part of a panel and discussion on the campaign’s bill. Bethany feels that the

potential of having a checkbox on the 1040 and information about conscientious objection sent out by the IRS would do more to promote our cause against paying for war than anything we can do now.

Meeting Decisions

The work and status of NWTRCC’s Coordinator is reviewed at the May meeting every two years through a questionnaire sent out for input from affiliate groups, counselors, and contacts. Ratings were high in most categories, and everyone is pleased to have Ruth Benn as Coordinator. Work on fundraising and outreach are areas that need an extra push, and commitments for improvement were made. Financially NWTRCC is holding steady, but we hope all the scarves will be sold by the end of November. The War Tax Boycott will continue with a focus on all war, not just Iraq and Afghanistan. Happily the Southern Appalachia Region (Katuah) expects to organize a regional gathering this year in response to our “challenge grant” from New England resisters who have held an annual gathering for more than 20 years.

Ideas for new literature include: pieces that connect environmental issues with WTR; more emphasis on resistance to all war; looking at taxes to resist beyond the income tax; featuring an article on “mixed” relationships—those that include a war tax resister and a non-resisting partner. We also expect to redesign our website in the coming months.

It was a great weekend, and we hope that



NWTRCC’s Administrative Committee meets all day Friday before the gathering begins. (l to r) Pam Allee, Donald Kaufman, Robert Randall, Ruth Benn, David Gross, and Bill Ramsey. Robert and Pam finished their terms at this meeting (thanks!). New members are Erica Weiland and Clare Hanrahan. Photo by Ray Gingerich.



Wilma and Ray Gingerich, hosts for the NWTRCC weekend, outside the Community Mennonite Church where we met in Harrisonburg, Virginia. *Photo by Susan Balzer.*

you will consider joining us for the next gathering, November 6–8 in Cleveland, Ohio. Charlie Hurst and Maria Smith are hosting. Please contact the NWTRCC office if you would like a copy of the full meeting minutes.

Peace Tax Fund Legislation and NWTRCC

As we have reported in the two previous issues, last fall the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund (NCPTF) sent out a request to groups listed as endorsers of the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill to renew their endorsement. NWTRCC had not discussed this in years, and thus began a process to reconsider that endorsement with decision-making at the May 3 Coordinating Committee meeting. The April issue of this newsletter laid out the basic arguments for and against NWTRCC's endorsement, and a session at the weekend gathering gave us time for deeper discussion on the topic. Presentations by Bethany Criss, Executive Director of NCPTF; David Gross, WTR from California; Ruth Benn, NWTRCC Coordinator; and Ray Gingerich, Harrisonburg WTR started off the session, and the discussion that followed covered an array of the issues and permutations of support for and against NWTRCC's endorsement.

When it came to a decision to renew the endorsement, the Coordinating Committee could not come to consensus. A straw poll indicated about a 40-60 split, for and against endorsement. The two key reasons expressed against endorsement (and these were about equally expressed) were about

1) aspects of the language and content of the bill, and, 2) about the technicalities of a coalition making endorsements, especially a standing endorsement as this one has been. In addition, the use of the word "religious" in the title and the fact that some in our coalition don't believe in any legislation were serious concerns. The lack of consensus meant that NCPTF will remove NWTRCC from the bill's endorsement list.

However, at the same time, it was made clear that NWTRCC will continue to support NCPTF in the ways that we support all of our affiliate organizations, and our relationship may not look much different. It is important to distinguish between an endorsement of the specific legislation and our ongoing support of all actions taken by individuals and groups in regard to conscientious objection to military taxation. Many comments sent in or made at the meeting included ideas for changes in the bill, and individuals with such an interest are encouraged to get involved with the Campaign. All groups in the NWTRCC network are reminded that they can endorse the bill.

Articles from the newsletter and comments that were sent to NWTRCC before the meeting and shared at the meeting are at nwtrcc.org/PTF_articles.htm. If you would like to see full minutes of the meeting, please contact the NWTRCC office for a copy. ▼

New WTR Fund

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Step 8 – It is now May and we are in the final stage of the fund's development. That is promoting its use to individuals, as well as educating them about war tax resistance. We will be doing this by seeking speaking opportunities, having literature available whenever our endorsers table, leafleting at peace events, writing articles for publications, using listserves, and submitting letters to the editor.

Whether or not establishing a local fund for redirected taxes is a good way to promote war tax resistance is yet to be shown. It certainly is a good way to gain access to peace and justice organizations and to educate them about the subject. Asking them to sponsor or endorse the fund forces them to give it serious thought. So far, there has been only one contributor to our fund...me. But then, making the decision to withhold even a symbolic portion of one's tax is not something that comes quickly or is made lightly. Stay tuned! ▼

Dissenting Opinions

Clare Hanrahan, a war tax resister for almost 30 years, has released a book of speeches given over the course of her activism. A number of the talks address war tax resistance, but the volume covers peace and justice issues including nonviolence, civil disobedience, prison and women's imprisonment, School of the Americas, and more. "When folks look back on this violent past century they'll know this southern woman spoke out," says Clare.

Here's an excerpt from one of her talks:

We must stop supporting this system of destruction. We cannot wait. Not until the next rigged election, not until we secure our own place, not until the risks are less, or the strategy clear.

We must start where we are.

Are we stockholders in corporations that profit from war?

Divest.

Are we taxpayers fueling the very evils we abhor?

Refuse.

Are we soldiers in an army of destruction?

Disobey.

Are we fearful?

Face that fear.

We must build the new in the crumbling shell of the old. Constructive programs energized from the grass roots are critical. Government is not our savior, just ask the people of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast.

We who fail to stand up for a warless world, we who fail to find a way to speak out for the Earth, to intercept the runaway train of state, it is we who are killing with the bullets of indifference, the poison of despair. It is we who are failing the vulnerable and the voiceless whose lives depend on our courage.

Gandhi believed that non-cooperation with evil is a sacred duty. He also knew that inaction in a time of conflagration is inexcusable.

We must be the change. Blessed be the change.

Dissenting Opinions: Public Addresses on Justice, Peace, and the Consequences of Dissent can be downloaded for \$6 or purchased as a book for \$12.98 online at www.lulu.com/content/5357775. ▼

Case Study of a New WTR Fund

By George Haeseler

I have been asked to write a chronology of how we were able to establish a war tax resistance fund here in Binghamton, New York. Perhaps this might help others interested in doing something similar in their communities.

Step 1 – In August of 2008, a few of us decided that there were sufficient numbers of local residents angry enough about our government's militarism that they would consider war tax resistance. We further decided that having a local fund for them to place their redirected taxes would help promote the national movement, as well as publicize how military spending can be put to better use locally. We were all members of a local chapter of Peace Action and thought it would be the ideal organization to sponsor this fund. However, we knew that few Board members were informed about WTR and that before they considered having Broome County Peace Action (BCPA) serve in this capacity, they would need to be educated and have their concerns addressed.

Step 2 – It took about a month for us to find an appropriate person to come before the Board. We contacted NWTRCC and asked for suggestions. They gave us the email addresses of three who were qualified and who lived within a reasonable traveling distance. We sent out an email to the three, explaining what we wanted and one accepted, David Schenck, who lived about a two-hour drive away. Since we were mainly interested in educating the BCPA Board members, as they would be the ones to vote on sponsoring the fund, we asked that David be scheduled to speak at one of the monthly Board meetings, when a good attendance would be assured. The Board voted in favor and agreed to pay his travel expenses plus a small honorarium. In addition, it decided to publicize his appearance more broadly in case there were others interested in the topic.

Step 3 – David came in October and spoke to an audience of about 30. He did an excellent job. We especially appreciated the way he involved the listeners. It just so happened that some progressive students were planning a "Weekend on Social Justice" at the local college campus in November and the Board thought this would be a great opportunity for David to give a similar pres-

entation to a younger audience. The Board voted to contact the weekend planners to see if they were willing to include him as one of the workshops. BCPA would pay David's travel expenses and give him a slightly larger honorarium. The students agreed.

Step 4 – The weekend was a huge success, with at least a couple of thousand attending. Of course, having Howard Zinn as the keynote speaker didn't hurt a bit! There were over 20 workshops, all interesting, with four competing at a time, so we were not surprised when the one on WTR attracted only 15. They were all ignorant about WTR. But, those who did attend were very attentive and glad they came. David did his usual fine job.

Step 5 – In December, we presented the plan for the fund to the Board and they approved its main points, which were to sponsor the fund and be the Area Contact for the NWTRCC. However, there was some disagreement on our proposal to have the fund place its emphasis on objections to the war and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan. We had stipulated this because we thought it would make the proposal more acceptable. BCPA was already on record as opposed to

these two interventions, as well as supporting those troops who had made the decision not to deploy. Needless to say, we were delighted to hear members argue for a broader scope. The Board also wanted a detailed explanation on how the fund would be administered and publicized. We accepted the challenge and met again.

Step 6 – We returned at the January meeting with the final document, which was approved unanimously and without any amendments. The final document contained the phrase: "BCPA does not advocate war tax resistance because it believes that individuals should make this decision without any coercion." That got the Board off the hook of advocating civil disobedience. I am guessing that without that phrase, the Board would probably not have agreed to sponsor the fund. A committee was appointed to administer and promote the fund. The committee requested and got an annual budget of \$100 for this purpose.

Step 7 – The next step was to recruit as many local organizations as possible to either endorse or cosponsor the fund. We did this by requesting the opportunity to appear before each to explain the fund and answer questions. Ten local peace organizations have so far endorsed the fund, including several that are religious.

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