

IF YOU WORK
FOR PEACE



STOP PAYING
FOR WAR.

More than a paycheck

NEWS FROM THE WAR TAX RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

June/July 2012

A Tax Day Speech

By Clare Hanrahan

Delivered on April 17, 2012, at Pritchard Park, Asheville, North Carolina.

“The greatest changes in history have only come when people are willing to put everything on the line.”

—Julia Butterfly Hill

Environmental activist and tree-sitter Julia Butterfly Hill took direct action when the IRS claimed she owed them \$150,000 from a court settlement. Instead of aiding and abetting war, Julia redirected this money to education, arts and cultural programs, community gardens, programs for Native Americans, alternatives to incarceration, and environmental protection.

When war is illegal, isn't paying war tax a crime?

I have refused to pay war taxes since 1981. That's the year I took the pledge. That's when I decided to break the deadly habit of paying for war.

It's not just our federal taxes that fuel war, but our lifestyles of waste and habitual consumption, this privilege that we maintain on the backs of the destitute of the world, is upheld by the Pentagon and its deadly force.

I'm one of thousands of people around this country who openly identify themselves as War Tax Resisters. Some file and refuse to pay. Some refuse to file or cooperate in any way. Some refuse a portion of federal taxes, some refuse to pay any at all.

Most War Tax Resisters are also Peace Tax Payers, redirecting refused war tax dollars to fund community needs. Local alternative Funds throughout the U.S. each year deliver more than \$50,000 in refused war taxes to support constructive projects.



Oakland Tax Day Dance

BAY-Peace: Better Alternatives for Youth and Northern California War Tax Resistance teamed up with Code Pink and others to protest militarism and war at the Oakland Federal Building on Tax Day 2012. The action included street theater, poetry, and this BAY-Peace original song:

People, People, People, can't you see? / They kill around the world with tax money.

Stealing from workers how their money's made, / I guess that's why we're broke and they're so paid!

People, People, People, can't you see? / They tax the poor more, the rich stay greedy.

No money for health or to educate, / I guess that's why we're broke and they're so paid!

Watch the performance at the link on our tax day page – nwtrcc.org/taxday2012-reports.php.

Photo by David Gross.

As we gather here today to call out Bank of America, to demand that they stop participating in this business of death—to demand that they stop funding mountain top removal coal mining enterprises, stop facilitating the buildup and modernization of nuclear weapons, and stop loaning millions to criminal enterprises like Eric Prince and

Blackwater/XE, the largest mercenary operation in the world.

As we say to Bank of America and its shareholders: Stop!

Are we willing to risk our own economic privilege to obstruct this business of death?

Who will block the doors to the post office today when most Americans will

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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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Passports and Tax Debts

Rumors have flown for years that you can't get a passport if you don't pay your taxes, but that has not been the case. However, now Congress is considering legislation that would deny or revoke passports from Americans who have tax debts in excess of \$50,000. The bill that contains this measure is called "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act" or "MAP 21," and was introduced by Senator Barbara Boxer to reauthorize funds for federal highway and transportation programs. It passed the Senate and is still under consideration by the House, where there is more opposition to the passport rule, but it could still pass because it's a small part of a larger bill. Contact your representative with your concerns.

Truly Fraudulent Returns

Identity theft is causing huge problems for the IRS and billions of lost federal dollars. In recent testimony before Congress, the Treasury inspector general for tax administration said the IRS detected 940,000 fake returns for 2010 in which identity thieves would have received \$6.5 billion in refunds. In addition the agency may have missed an additional 1.5 million returns with possibly fraudulent refunds worth more than \$5.2 billion. The thieves just need a social security number, corresponding name and birthday, and they rush to file with fake addresses before the taxpayer has filed. They often ask for the refund by hard-to-trace prepaid debit cards. It can take up to a year for the real taxpayer to get the

situation straightened out and receive their refund. We know of one nonfiler in the WTR network who was apparently the victim of this kind of fraud, although it is impossible to know how the thief managed to carry out the fraud.

"Phantom Income"

Ed Hedemann came up with this idea for resistance. What do you think?

Potentially, there are many people who feel unable to blatantly resist payment of taxes because they are living below the taxable level, including those in low-income communities (such as the Catholic Worker) or those with declining income and who, instead, depend more and more on Social Security.

But why should arbitrary IRS rules and tax tables prevent low-income people from resisting? Now there is a way: Fill out a 1040 form claiming enough "phantom income" to push you just over the taxable level. This is somewhat counterintuitive for most of us, who routinely seek ways to reduce our taxable income or increase our deductions.

With this method a resister might owe, say, \$10 in taxes, which is not a big risk should the IRS succeed in collecting. In the unlikely instance of the IRS discovering this ruse, it would be surprising if they charged the resister with fraud. But if they did, it could create quite a publicity coup for the movement! ▼



Many Thanks



Network Updates

Thanks to all of you for your continued support and to these affiliates for recent dues payments:

Mennonite Central Committee

Taxes for Peace! Eugene, OR

War Resisters League National

And thanks to *Brad Lytle* for his help in hosting the NWTRCC Gathering in Chicago May 18-20 and to *Katey Feit* and *Mike Bremer* and family for cooking great meals for us and helping us get around Chicago. We are grateful to the Friends of the 57th Street Meeting for use of the space and to *Lisa Rademacher* and the Sophia Community for their hospitality.

NWTRCC's Network List of Affiliates, Area Contacts, Counselors, and Alternative Funds appear 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.

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