

IF YOU WORK
FOR PEACE



STOP PAYING
FOR WAR.

More than a paycheck

NEWS FROM THE WAR TAX RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

October/November 2010

Talking Taxes and Taking Action Against Military Spending

The tried and true penny poll seems to be experiencing a resurgence. Two recent reports about polling in Pennsylvania and New York City indicate that the present economy may offer an especially good opportunity for talking taxes and war with the public. The New York City Granny Peace Brigade has christened their plastic tube set up “Ms. Gizmo,” and they’ve been energized by the response:

[On September 16] the Granny Peace Brigade took Ms. Gizmo to Brooklyn. For the fifth time she was out on the town and again, she was embraced with enthusiasm by people passing by. What is it about Ms. Gizmo that makes her so very popular? After all, physically she’s just a bunch of plastic tubes standing side-by-side in a couple of racks. Is it the labels on her tubes? Or is it the question we ask? “How would you spend your own tax dollars?” We offer each passer-by a plastic bag containing 20 pennies. People can drop these pennies into Ms. Gizmo’s tubes in any way they see fit. That’s it – 20 pennies and eight categories. Of the hundreds of people who have distributed pennies, not a single person has done this thoughtlessly. All have concentrated as they allocated these modest funds.

The key to Ms. Gizmo’s charm—New Yorkers want to be heard. Ms. Gizmo is a step towards giving us a voice. She helps to bring us together and start conversations. We’ll see where we can go from here.

—Eva-Lee Baird for the
Granny Peace Brigade, NYC

Beaver County Peace Links and the 4th CD Chapter of Progressive Democrats of America had a table and penny poll at the



“It’s really a blast because you get to talk to the people in the street and share concerns,” said Barbara Harris of the NYC Granny Peace Brigade. See their blog for more reports and photos, grannypeacebrigade.org/wordpress. Photo by Bud Korotzer, Aug. 24, East Harlem.



Photo by Bud Korotzer, Aug. 24, East Harlem.

Big Knob County Fair, August 30 through September 4, in Rochester, Pennsylvania. Randy Shannon and Carl Davidson posted an interesting story online about their many

interactions in at the table. “We gave people something to think about that they don’t usually encounter at the Fair, a different path ahead: peace and prosperity instead of war and austerity. Perhaps the most important thing that happened was a discussion of the war in a public arena.” This was seconded by a somewhat intimidating man who stared at the table and banners then came up and said, “My son was killed in Iraq. No one out here gives a damn about what’s happening over there. This means more to me than you will ever know.” See beavercountyblue.org for the full report, or contact the NWTRCC office, and we’ll print out a copy for you.

For the basics on setting up a penny poll see nwtrcc.org/penny_polls.php or click on the “Programs” button and the “What you can do” link on the NWTRCC website. ▼

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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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Tax Relief

NWTRCC hears from many readers who get letters from various and sundry groups offering to “help you resolve your tax situation.” Sometimes if you call them and tell them about war tax resistance they listen and say “good luck.” Sometimes they hang up. Some send letters, others postcards, and some look more legit than others. A recent one that arrived at our door really had us tricked for a while. The return address with an eagle logo and warning on the outside of “\$2,000 Fine or 5 Yrs. Imprisonment” for interfering with delivery gave it that government feel. The inside looked much like an IRS form, but then there’s that tiny type: “This program is not part of a government agency we are Ideal Tax Solutions [sic]... This program is not in any way being offered by a government agency or designed to appear as coming from an agency of the government.”

The IRS files public liens as part of their collection efforts. These “tax relief” companies, fly-by-night or not, scour the public records to collect mailing lists of potential clients, so when a lien is filed you may receive a pile of these mailings. If one wanted to settle with the IRS it might be safer and more cost-effective to go directly to the IRS to negotiate, but it would be wise to get a copy of the book *Stand Up To the IRS* (Nolo Press, nolo.com) first and educate yourself on the procedures. For a very complicated case hiring a trusted tax attorney might be necessary.

“Frivolous” Problems Continue

A war tax resister in Portland, Oregon, received notice that he was being charged a frivolous filing penalty of \$5,000 in September. Once again the IRS appears to be ignoring its own regulations and administering the penalty incorrectly. The resister filled out his 1040 form honestly and enclosed a letter about his refusal to pay when he mailed it in. If there is no reason to question the numbers on the form, there should be no application of the frivolous penalty, but the IRS is telling the resister he will have to pay the fine *before* he can challenge the penalty. The IRS will not share with him, or his Congressman’s office, their reasoning for assessing the penalty. The resister is refusing to pay and seeking all means to have the penalty lifted. Stay tuned.

Efforts Up, Income Down

The IRS is getting meaner, but that doesn’t mean they’re getting any more money. A Taxpayer Advocate report said that since 1999, the IRS has increased lien filings by about 475 percent and levies by about 600 percent, yet inflation-adjusted revenue raised by the IRS collection function has actually declined by about seven percent over that period. Another recent report from the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration tells a similar story: in 2009 the IRS brought in less money from collections and left more delinquent accounts stranded, while at the same time ramping up its use of collection enforcement tools. ▼

Many Thanks



Network Updates

To these affiliate groups:

Christian Peacemaker Teams

Citizens for Peace in Space

War Resisters League National

To RESIST, Inc., a national progressive foundation, for a grant of \$1,000 for our work. “We believe it’s especially important to help grassroots organizations that might be too small or too local—or too radical—for mainstream foundations,” says Board Chair Miabi Chatterji. For more information on their work see resistinc.org, or contact them at 259 Elm St., Somerville, MA 02144, (617) 623-5110.

Thanks to everyone who returned their blue postcard—perhaps the most returned ever! We will be adding updates to the network list online in the coming weeks. Printed lists of national contacts may be requested from the NWTRCC office after October 20.

REMEMBRANCE

NWTRCC mourns the loss of our friend and fellow-traveler **Tom MacLean**, who died in Greenfield, Massachusetts on August 22. Tom was active with Pioneer Valley War Tax Resistance, attended many NWTRCC gatherings, and was a NWTRCC contact for PVWTR.

(more thanks, page 3)

A Public Response to Larry Dansinger and Ruth Benn

By Karl Meyer

I think it's important to respond to the prevailing view in your counseling article in the August/September issue of *More Than a Paycheck*, summarized by your statement, "We still believe that the risk of criminal prosecution is enormously lessened when the resistance has been open."

As a counseling statement I believe this is seriously misleading, and simply not based in fact.

Although I myself have been a highly visible public refuser, undoubtedly for decades the public resister best known to the Chicago office of the IRS, as a counselor I believe that the risk of criminal prosecution, or of highly disruptive struggles with the IRS over tax collection efforts, is greatly lessened by quiet refusal combined with not reporting directly to the IRS, or indirectly calling attention through publicity in mainstream public media.

Across a half century of public refusal, I have personally counseled hundreds of war tax refusers and objectors, and thousands more through my writings on methods and consequences of war tax refusal.

In 1971 I served nine months of a two-year prison sentence for war tax refusal. I was indicted on April 15, a year after a meeting with the District Director of the IRS, during which I unfolded on his desk a

WRL photographic poster showing civilian victims lying in a trench at the infamous My Lai massacre. Unlike the prosecutor and judge in the recent Frank Donnelly case, Charles Kocoras, the prosecutor in my case (and now a federal judge himself) featured the public nature of my conscientious refusal as a reason for giving me a heavy sentence; when I pointed out that my resistance to paying an amount estimated at about \$500 was done openly for reasons of conscience, Judge Joseph Sam Perry snorted, "Is it a virtue to rob a bank openly?" before he imposed the maximum jail term for each of two misdemeanor charges, to be served consecutively. We cannot generalize about the attitudes of prosecutors and judges. If you acted quietly and privately, they may excoriate you for "cheating," and if you acted openly and publicly, they may punish you for being an example to others.

Among those I have counseled who chose to act quietly without reporting to the IRS, I know of none who faced criminal prosecution, and many who faced little or no collection claims or collection struggles with the IRS. On the other hand, in the late 60s and early 70s a couple dozen who declared themselves openly faced criminal prosecution, a dozen went to jail for brief terms, and many who reported their refusal

directly to the IRS experienced protracted, expensive, and discouraging struggles over IRS collection efforts.

In addition to several thousand people who may be consciously in touch with our education and counseling network, there are of course millions of people who avoid or evade payment of large amounts of legal tax liability. If discovered and pursued by the IRS, some may bring forward and articulate principled objections to military spending, as Francis Donnelly and Carlos Steward have done, especially if they discover our war tax refusal network and get support and encouragement from us in a time of great anxiety and personal stress for them.

As one whose public acts of war tax resistance have been reported in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, and dozens of other mainstream news outlets around the country, I do not doubt that widespread publicity broadens our outreach and presents to the public at large the moral challenge of war tax refusal, and the moral imperative of refusing to pay for military crimes. A public movement is built by those who act publicly, not by those who hold back or act in secret. However, publicity about extended prison sentences and epic struggles with the IRS over collection efforts can be a two-edged sword, strengthening the resolve of some who rally to our cause, but weakening the resolve of others who walk quietly away. I have always tried to reassure the latter group that it is feasible and practical to do quiet war tax refusal without provoking heroic confrontations with the IRS and the federal courts.

Around 2003, Ed Hedemann compiled for War Resisters League a list of all known arrests, trials, and imprisonments for identifiable war tax refusal between 1942 and 2003. To set the factual record straight, I am sure that Ed would be the best person to bring that list up to date, and analyze for us how many were prosecuted as a result of open or public reports to the IRS, and how many were discovered by the IRS by other means and publicly identified as war tax objectors only after the IRS took action against them.

A special thanks to Peg Morton of Eugene, Oregon, for an "early bequest" coming to NWTRCC through RESIST. We wanted to share some of what Peg says about her donation:

I received my inheritance about 20 years ago and have not ever felt "easy" about it. I did not work to make this money, it was passed on from generation to generation, and I am a part of a privileged class that is able to live on this kind of inheritance. I also do not believe in that part of the capitalist system that has become dominated by and is dependent on huge corporations. . . . I believe that this system is inherently a violent one since it is a major cause of much oppression and much poverty and suffering around the world. This system is protected by the military of the United States, other militaries in other countries, and their resulting armed violence.

Finally I have come to the point of laying down the burden of this ongoing spiritual struggle—and it feels good! I am gifting that portion of my inheritance that is still invested in stocks to various not-for-profit groups, and to members of my family. I've been influenced by the people I've met in NWTRCC, Catholic Worker, SOA Watch and the solidarity movement. I feel as though what I'm doing is a lot less than people who are in NWTRCC, who I've brushed paths with over my years of activism, who live in or close to voluntary poverty. It's only a step I'm taking. It's one many people have taken in different ways.

continued on page 6

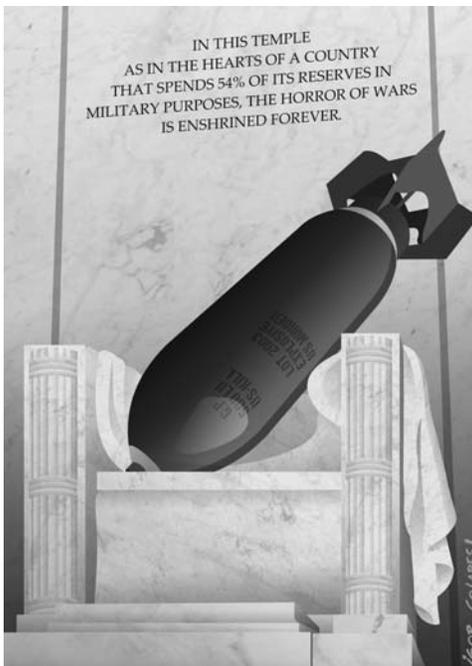
War Tax Resistance Ideas and Actions

Protest, Again and Again

As reported on his blog (evanreeves.com/blog/tax-protest-followup-1), war tax resister Evan Reeves is trying a new strategy. He says he plans to make repayment to the IRS by sending a hand-written check for every cent owed with the name of a fallen soldier in the memo. "That would bring us to 5,563 names (hence 5,563 checks). If I'm going to repay it, they're sure as hell going to have to go to great lengths to get their money."

Declaration of Conscience

"A Movement of Conscience" is a project developed by Quakers around the war tax concerns committee of New York Yearly Meeting. If participating in and paying for war violates your conscience, their materials encourage you to state that clearly in writing and join with others by signing the "Declaration of Conscience." Written and online materials guide individuals or study groups through steps to recognize their own conscience and put that truth into a written statement. The group has also produced a 9-minute film, "A Declaration of Conscience about Paying for War," (online or DVD) that



Thanks to Igor Colares from Brazil for sending us this illustration. See more of his work at igorcolares.com.



On August 8, Adele Kushner, wearing a necklace of peace cranes, was honored for her lifetime of work for a nuclear-free world with the dedication of a peace pole near an ancient Cherokee village on the grounds of the Sautee-Nacoochee community center in the Appalachian Foothills of Northeast Georgia. Activists from throughout the region marked the 65th year since the nuclear devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with a commitment to continue the work for a nuclear-free world. Adele has been a NWTRCC contact in Georgia for many years.

Photo courtesy of Clare Hanrahan, far right.

outlines each step in the process. See the film and materials at consciencestudio.com/declaration or order the DVD (comes with a written guide) by calling Quaker Books, 1-800-966-4556.

Book Review

War is a God that Demands

Human Sacrifice

By Muriel T. Stackley with illustrations by Robert Joy

War is a God that Demands Human Sacrifice, a book of poetry by war tax resister Muriel T. Stackley, reveals the ugly side of war. With Robert Joy's art, the two together were able to craft verse and graphics to evoke feelings of outrage and compassion. Some might wonder how two Kansas artists chose to talk about the city-states of Greece, the Crusades, and the perpetual U.S. wars. Is there a connection? Could it make a difference? Muriel Stackley is quite sure we could do better, and questions like these inspire her poetry: "Surely we have the intellectual and monetary resources to get

along on this planet. Surely we can politically reward those elected officials who serve their constituencies. Surely we can shame those elected officials who line their pockets at the expense of their people. Surely we can use our taxes for the good of humanity." Proceeds support the work of Christian Peacemaker Teams.

—Donald D. Kaufman, Heartland Peace Tax Fund, Newton, Kansas

For a copy of *War is a God that Demands Human Sacrifice* (Wordsworth, 2009), send a check for \$10, made out to Christian Peacemaker Teams, to Muriel T. Stackley, 2527 C Street, Lincoln, NE 68502-1857.

Honors from the Heart(land)

In June the Heartland Peace Tax Group, Newton, Kansas, recognized decades of peace work by Martha Graber and Fern Goering, both 90 years old and both still active peacemakers.

As a pastor's wife, Fern chose to serve in the kitchen, not in the pulpit. The Biblical

WTR Ideas and Actions

message “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger, and you welcomed me” are guiding scriptures for Fern. She cooked for friends at the Bethel College Mennonite Church and for strangers from near and far. She offered a couple new to town shelter at her house as long as they needed a home and her home became their home.



Fern Goering. Photo by Susan Balzer.

Martha Graber has been a member of the Heartland Peace Tax Group and has refused to pay for war by staying below a taxable income and/or by donating as much as 50% of her income to charities. She directed the first daycare for children in Hesston and



Martha Graber. Photo by Susan Balzer.

helped found the Newton Area Senior Center. She pioneered in involving the church in sex education and the inclusion and acceptance of gays and lesbians into the church.

As part of their honor they were given “Foreclose on War, Invest in People” scarves, a message matching the ways they have modeled peacemaking in their community.

—Susan Balzer

Join Us!

- “Experiments with Truth,” Gandhi-King Conference on Peacemaking, October 22-24, Memphis, TN, gandhikingconference.org. Asheville activists Clare Hanrahan and Coleman Smith will have a table with NWTRCC literature and a workshop on the Southeast nuclear complex.
- Vigil to Close the School of the Americas, November 19-21, 2010, Fort Benning, Georgia, soaw.org. NWTRCC table and leafleting. Contact the NWTRCC office if you can help.

RESOURCES



“Death and Taxes DVD is full of statements that anyone who’s for human rights should know, whether or not they become resisters. NWTRCC is one of many diverse groups that resists the massive human suffering caused by capitalist production, in their case—constant wars. I hope more people will get the opportunity to see *Death and Taxes*.”

—Kei Utsumi,
Los Angeles, CA

Order your copy today! Sliding scale \$10-\$20 each. Send checks to NWTRCC or order online at nwtrcc.org/deathandtaxes.php.

New Call to Resist

From 1040forpeace.org: “\$10.40 for Peace is a new campaign supporting symbolic tax resistance as a form of democratic expression that peacefully and legitimately opposes military spending and the use of U.S. military power to control other peoples and their resources. Symbolic tax resistance may take the form of underpaying taxes by \$10.40 each year. Beyond resistance, we seek to redirect revenue to peaceful purposes and restore the vitality of citizen participation in our governance.”

Faith-based organizers in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, initiated the campaign in early 2010. The network has no formal organizational structure, but a recent national conference call drew many war tax resisters from Mennonite circles and others active with the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund.

The website explains the mission, goals, political analysis, motivation, and strategy. It includes a growing list of statements from endorsers and testimonials from participants, along with instructions on how to organize a local group and links for more information, including to NWTRCC and the One Million Taxpayers for Peace website, vestiges of a similar effort. Perhaps the time is ripe for this idea to take off!



\$10.40 FOR PEACE
SUPPORT AMERICA'S TRUE CALLING



Cold Weather is Coming

Stay Warm and Inform with a “Foreclose on War, Invest in People” scarf. Buy one for yourself or give wintertime gifts to friends and relatives, or, double the benefit: Buy scarves for friends of Casa Maria Hospitality House in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and we’ll ship directly to them. Cherry, Off-White, Patina with the message embroidered in contrasting colors. New price for the new season: \$10 each. Send checks to NWTRCC or order online at nwtrcc.org/store.php.

Criminal Cases and Fear (II)

continued from page 3

We can make only the roughest kind of guesstimate of how many public war tax objectors and protesters have never been targeted for criminal investigation or prosecution; it would be presumptuous to even try to guess how many people have avoided or evaded payment of all or part of federal income tax obligations, in part for reasons of conscientious objection to military spending. I can tell you how many mice and squirrels I have trapped and deported from our Nashville Greenlands house and gardens this year, but I would not try to guess how many may be out there hiding in the fields nearby. I would not advise them to report to me if they would like to keep eating in our gardens. ▼

Karl Meyer helped create the Nashville Greenlands community in Nashville, Tennessee. His story is included in the book War Tax Resistance.

In Response to Karl

My definition of “public” is not as “in your face” as maybe Karl is thinking and certainly not what he did. I think my definition of

“public” is his definition of “quiet refusal” that tells some small or not so small segment of the public what that person is doing but not enough to make the IRS feel embarrassed or threatened. “Public” can just be sending a letter to a newspaper or a congressional office. I send a letter each year to the IRS (without a return); that is public in my mind. Also, being public (whatever that means) makes it much more likely that the IRS will try to seize the money through a civil collection but not criminally prosecute on the excuse of tax fraud. The most likely chances for criminal prosecution are either what could be interpreted as fraud or the “in your face” public actions such as what Karl did. Anyone in the middle is probably safe from criminal prosecution.

—Larry Dansinger

I do think some of this hinges on words, and some differences may be philosophical. I fumbled with the words “open” or “honest” resistance, partly not wanting to sound judgmental. For those who file, a return that is not entirely honest, such as underreporting income, can lead to the kinds of criminal cases that Frank Donnelly and Carlos Steward faced. Nonfilers who have reported income can also find themselves in hot water, as did Tony Serra in California

(see MTAP, August 2007). When people are considering how to refuse to pay for war, NWTRCC recommends that counselors offer a full range of options and their potential legal consequences—or lack thereof. After that it’s up to the individual to decide what they want to do. Ed Hedemann adds some history on page 7. In addition, I would note that the prosecutions Karl refers to were at a time when the peace movement was strong. Should we rise to those levels of war tax resistance again we may see an increase in prosecutions. For better or worse the government also reacts to resistance by changing techniques, like relying on enhanced collection procedures, as Larry mentions above.

Lastly, I don’t want to make it sound like war tax resisters do not want to accept consequences for their actions. Anyone of us who chooses an act of civil disobedience knows there may be difficult consequences. In fact, any one of us who lives a life that does not conform with societal norms deals with the consequences of those choices. Heather Snow’s profile on the back page reflects the struggle. Often the consequences are rewarding, but in the political culture we are facing today nothing is certain.

—Ruth Benn

Building an Organized War (Tax) Resistance Movement

25th Annual New England Gathering of War Tax Resisters and Supporters and National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee Meeting

Friday–Saturday, November 5 & 6 at Cambridge Friends Meeting
5 Longfellow Park, Cambridge, MA, 02138

Sunday, November 7 at Encuentro5
33 Harrison Ave., 5th Floor, Boston, MA, 02111

Join us for panels, how-to sessions, small group discussions, strategizing, home-grown entertainment, and more. The weekend will include support and new connections for those already resisting and history, how-tos, risks and rewards for newcomers.

A war tax resistance counselors’ training for experienced resisters will be offered on Sunday afternoon from 1–5 pm. Please pre-register by calling Ruth Benn at the NWTRCC office, 800-269-7464.

Special features: Food by Pacifeast Caterers, and a real-live fun and maybe even fundraising auction with our own expert auctioneer, David Waters, as part of Saturday night’s talent. Bring a little extra cash, and you might win a great prize!



To the IRS
representative
who took my car

You mercenary personary
asking for my no-good car
as token payment of a tax
that goes exclusively for war.

You’ll have to pull it all the way,
its plucky spirit long since gone,
a little like this land of ours
urged on and on by Pentagon.

Muriel T. Stackley

All rights reserved

(See page 4 for a review of
Muriel’s new poetry book)

War Tax Resisters in History

By Ed Hedemann

Because of her opposition to the Vietnam War, Margie McFadden (Kansas City, MO) stopped paying her telephone tax in 1970. Later that year an IRS man came and put stickers on her car indicating they had seized it. Margie immediately removed the stickers, stuffed them in the agent's pocket, hopped in the car, drove it into her garage, locking the door. The agent never returned. Later Margie decided to travel via bicycle and mass transit, so she signed her car over to her son. (*The Peacemaker*, 12/11/71)

Early one morning in 1968 Karl North (Rochester, NY) was alerted by neighbors that the IRS had seized his car and was about to have it towed for \$11.29 in unpaid telephone tax. Without time to grab his car key, Karl rushed out of the house and lay down under the car. This disconcerted the IRS enough that when they stopped everything to call the police, he ran back into the house, got the key, rushed back out, and drove the car off. When he returned on foot, the IRS said he would be prosecuted for "forcible rescue of seized property." He never heard from them again. (*The Peacemaker*, 9/7/68)

While most people have had little opportunity to resist property seizures, there have been other cases of dramatic car rescues, such as Wally and Juanita Nelson (1971) who blocked a tow truck from taking two of their cars; Joe Gerson and friends (1972) unsuccessfully tried to block a tow truck; Maureen Flannery and Peter Reilly (1985) successfully held off an IRS attempt to tow their car. The first IRS property seizure on a war tax resister in modern times was in 1951 when Walter Gormly had his car taken and auctioned.

These are among the many remarkable cases of resisters refusing to passively accept IRS inevitabilities that I came across while

doing a major update to the lists of IRS property seizures of war tax resisters and resisters being taken to court since World War II. To find the results, go to nwtrcc.org, click on the "War Tax Resistance" button, select "Consequences," and you'll find the two links to the lists. Contact the NWTRCC office for printed versions.

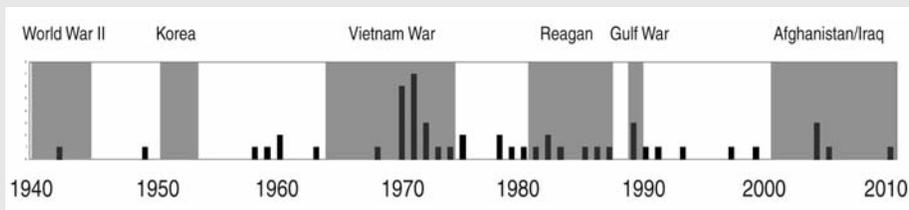
Responding to Karl Meyer's query (page 3) regarding those resisters who were indicted for inflating W-4 forms, from 1970 to 1973, 16 were indicted for claiming too many dependents on their W-4 forms, 12 were convicted, and 7 served time in jail. It is not clear how many of those 16 were "public" like Karl. Some may have just submitted the revised W-4 to their employer. Because of a 1972 revision of the W-4—changing "dependents" to "allowances"—criminal prosecution for inflating a W-4 became much less likely. The last such instance was in 1980.

Aside from those almost 40-year-old cases of W-4 resistance, the vast majority of court actions against war tax resisters have been for refusal to turn over records to the IRS. In addition, there were at least six cases of refusal to file, two for falsifying returns, and four for other reasons.

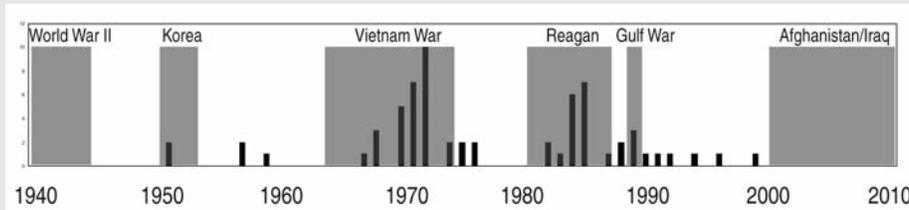
Of the 53 resisters taken to court since World War II, 35 were convicted; and of those, 30 were jailed. Aside for Tony Serra (taken to court in three separate decades) and Robin Harper (twice), everyone else has been so honored just once that we know of. These, of course, do not include Tax Court cases (not really a "court" but an administrative arm of the IRS) initiated by resisters or arrests for sit-ins at the IRS.

I'm sure these lists are incomplete, so if you have corrections or additions, please let us know. And watch for more "War Tax Resisters in History" blurbs in upcoming issues and on the NWTRCC website.

War tax resisters taken to court.
The shortest columns represent one person, the tallest seven people.



IRS property seizures of war tax resisters.
The shortest column represents one person, the tallest ten people.



Write Imprisoned War Tax Resisters

See previous issue or website for their stories.

Francis Donnelly, 01787-036
Unit E, Federal Correctional Institute Camp
P.O. Box 699, Estill, SC 29918

Carl W. Steward, 09105-088
FPC Montgomery, Federal Prison Camp
Montgomery, AL 36112

War Tax Resisting

By Heather Snow, Durango, Colorado

When I was a young girl around the age of 10, I already understood what a corrupt world we lived in. I had a deep distrust for society and mostly government. I had a few jobs when I was 17, and decided not to pay my taxes as a statement against paying for war and supporting a government who didn't really take care of its people. I became married at a young age and was unable to talk my husband into being a resister. As my life went by, and I had children and became divorced, I was determined to remain a War Tax Resister, though I didn't have that name for it then. I saw myself only as a rebel. I didn't talk to many people about it, keeping it a secret life.

As I was hired at various jobs, I simply ignored the IRS by not filing. I moved almost every 2 years, went to college, got a degree, and a profession as a massage therapist. This job allowed me to be self-supporting, and I continued to ignore the IRS. I never heard a word from them (1984-1995).

In 1995 I was hired as a masseuse at a Physical Therapist's office. I grossed about \$30,000. This time the IRS found me and fined me, but didn't ask about all the missing years of filing. I contacted NWTRCC for advice and found the War Tax Resisters Penalty Fund (WTRPF). The fund helps people in my dilemma. I managed to pay the fines and WTRPF paid me back at a later date. I continued not filing, and not hearing a word from the IRS. I also wrote them a letter protesting about the Iraq war, and war in general, letting them know where I stood.

In 1996 I received an inheritance, which allowed me to become a house and land owner, if there is really such a thing. I couldn't control that money or the taxes the bank automatically paid. I could get equity and mortgages without documentation. Nowadays, you could not do this.

Living with this secret became more difficult as the downturned economy was affecting my ability to build my business. I needed to get a "real" job. In 2007 I began to file, but didn't have to pay. In 2008, I worked for a corporation caring for disabled people. It was a good job, but a terrible corporation. I enjoyed "benefits" and paid vacations. I saw how the other half lives! Then I had to file my taxes, and I owed quite a lot of money which I hadn't saved for them! I managed to

pay the state taxes and talked the IRS into a very low payment plan. Mostly, I am just paying penalties and interest which are very expensive. But still, they are getting very little out of me (\$50.00 monthly). It literally pains me to have to pay them. My soul aches, and I have been very unhappy. I had decided that I would have to join the system or fear losing my house to the IRS.

In retrospect, I am happy I spent so many years not paying or supporting this illegal branch of government, although I think it made it harder for me to join the workforce. I usually chose jobs under the table, living on the fringes of society. I never went further than a B.A in college, as I knew if I were to become a "professional" I would have to pay taxes.

The corporate job ended with them firing me for being too outspoken about things in the workplace that were simply wrong. If this is how corporations work, I never want to work for another one again. Now I am working under the table doing home health care. I will file this year, hoping I won't owe anything, but will do my best to disappear again!

I wait to sell my house and go underground permanently. I do not believe in



Photo courtesy of Heather Snow.

owning houses, either, for it is the bank who truly owns them. Land ownership is a game made up to support this terrible thing called The American Dream. It should be the American Slave Nightmare. Remember what George Carlin once said, "It's called the American Dream, because you have to be asleep to believe it!"

Power to the peaceful. ▼



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