

# More Than a Paycheck REFUSING to PAY for WAR



## 31 Years of Resistance

## Economic Disobedients Meet in NYC

By Ruth Benn

**T**he previous issue of this newsletter introduced the idea of economic disobedience as practiced by tax resisters in Spain. Members of NWTRCC's Strategy Committee picked up this idea as a way to join war tax resistance to a broader network of activists. Our experimenting with it included a panel at the November 1-3 War Tax Resistance Gathering in New York City. Judging by evaluation comments such as "really enlightening," "exciting," "real seriousness," and "terrific energy," the experiment showed promise for more discussions like this. The Coordinating Committee encourages local activists to use this model in your communities.

NWTRCC Social Media Consultant Erica Weiland introduced the topic of Economic Disobedience and the panel members: Andrew Ross, an NYU professor and participant in Strike Debt; Tom Gogan, National Organizer with US Labor Against the War; Taleigh Smith, green jobs organizer with Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition and former staff with Pastors for Peace; and Joanne Kennedy with Maryhouse Catholic Worker, who hosted our Friday evening dinner and program.



Andrew Ross speaking on the panel on economic disobedience at Catholic Worker Maryhouse during the NWTRCC gathering, November 1-3 in New York City. Tom Gogan sips some water, with Taleigh Smith to the right.

Photo by Ed Hedemann.

Here's a summary of the presentations:

**Andrew Ross** talked about household and student debt. Seventy-seven percent of U.S. households are in serious debt with one in seven Americans pursued by debt collectors. Banks have grown bigger and richer, and the government no longer even tries to keep them in check. Efforts among Occupy activists to start a debtors movement among students did not take off, but out of that a broader effort called Strike Debt emerged, focusing on four kinds of debt: mortgages, credit card, student, and medical. The Rolling Jubilee

continued on page 4 ↪

## A Living Legacy



Sallie Marx speaking during a granting ceremony on tax day 2009 in front of the IRS in New York City. Photo by Ed Hedemann.

**S**allie Marx, a dear friend and fellow war tax resister, died at age 84 on November 11 in New York City. Sallie was a cofounder of NYC War Tax Resistance and People's Life Fund, and ardent friend and supporter of NWTRCC, the War Resisters League, and many other peace oriented organizations. She has no known living relatives, but a group of dedicated, loving friends saw to her wellbeing over the past year or so. Those who knew Sallie can attest to the indomitableness of her spirit throughout her life of resistance and dedicated work for peace and justice. Sallie helped found the NYC People's Life Fund 42 years ago, promoted it and kept it going. To

continued on page 7 ↪

## More Than a Paycheck REFUSING to PAY for WAR

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**More Than a Paycheck: Refusing to Pay for War** is a bimonthly publication of the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee, a clearing-house 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 are \$15 per year.*

**NWTRCC**

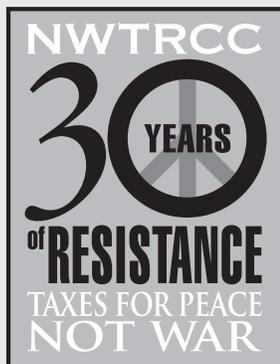
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## Many Thanks

To everyone who has donated in response to our recent appeal—and those of you about to respond!

For keeping up with affiliate dues we are grateful to:

**Madison Area WTR/Alternative Fund, Wisconsin**

**Michiana War Tax Refusers, South Bend, Indiana**

**Pioneer Valley War Tax Resistance, Brattleboro, Vermont**

## Counseling Notes

### Health Care Act

Our next issue may have a longer article on the Affordable Care Act (ACA), but during the “WTR Updates” workshop at our recent gathering this was the most requested topic. It’s important to remind readers that the best information in WTR counseling is anecdotal, i.e., we learn from experiences. Since the new health care system is so new (and haphazard) we are only just beginning to learn the details and implications for resisters. To complicate matters, systems vary from state to state.

A few people in our workshop had applied online or by phone. One chose to answer “no” when asked if she was going to file a tax return; she also chose not to enter her social security number. Her application got stuck, and the phone support people were unable to help. Given the problems with signing up, this may have nothing to do with her answers. Another who successfully applied ran into this paragraph:

*In order to simplify the application redetermination process, I authorize Washington Healthplanfinder to obtain my updated federal tax information for a period of no more than five years.*

She found no explanation of “application redetermination,” but did not check the box. Her application went through. Others found that there are options other than tax forms to prove your income. Those with low incomes are supposed to apply for Medicaid, but your income has to be quite low. Many low and moderate wage earners will not qualify for financial help and will find the cost of the insurance beyond their means.

In New York State, after you’ve spent about 20 minutes just getting through the basics, you are asked to agree to this:

*As part of the application process, we may need to retrieve your confidential information from data sources, including Social Security, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, and other state databases the Department of Health determines are necessary to decide if you qualify.*

Department of Homeland Security? Forget that.

This is a good point to refer you to an article by Margaret Flowers and Kevin Zeese, “Obamacare: The Biggest Insurance Scam in History,” which was published October 30, 2013, on Truthout ([truth-out.org](http://truth-out.org)). Many of us find ourselves defending this legislation because of the desperate need to fix health care in this country, but as Flowers and Zeese argue, “The industries that profit from our current health care system wrote the legislation, heavily influenced the regulations and have received waivers exempting them from provisions in the law. This has all been done to protect and enhance their profits.”

The ACA appears inextricably linked to the income tax system. If you are someone who is supposed to sign up but does not want to or can afford not to, you can opt out and pay a penalty. Although not well publicized, the [healthcare.gov](http://healthcare.gov) website does have information about the penalty, which is the higher of these amounts: 1% of your yearly household income (maximum is the national average yearly premium for a bronze plan), or, \$95 per person for the year (\$47.50 per child under 18). Proving insurance or paying a penalty will be on the 2014 tax forms a year from now. One workshop attendee heard from a knowledgeable source that if too many people opt out the whole system will collapse. This raised a good question: is opting out an act of economic disobedience? ●

## Network Updates

The Network List of Affiliates, Area Contacts, Counselors, and Alternative Funds has been updated and the latest contact information is online at [nwtrcc.org/contacts\\_counselors.php](http://nwtrcc.org/contacts_counselors.php), or contact the NWTRCC office ([nwtrcc@nwtrcc.org](mailto:nwtrcc@nwtrcc.org) or 1-800-269-7464), if you would like a printed list by mail.

## Legislative Campaign in UK Promoting Alternative Security

Originally printed in "Conscience Update," Autumn 2012, this is a slightly edited version of an article by the staff of Conscience, *Taxes for Peace Not War*, located in London, England.

**H**ypothecation is the process of assigning tax revenues to a specific end. Conscience advocates for an update in the law so that those with a conscientious objection to military taxation can have the part of their taxes that currently go towards war and the preparations for war go to other forms of security instead. We are not campaigning for a change in the amount spent on security and defense, but a change in the way the money is spent. We believe that there are other more effective (and cheaper) ways of providing national security that do not require our taxes being used to kill.

A common argument used against our proposal is that if conscientious objectors won the right to divert taxes away from military expenditure, a range of other groups and individuals would demand a similar right to divert their taxes away from paying for state education, new roads or the National Health Service, for example. However, the peace tax case is different for a number of reasons, the major one being that the military intentionally kill and harm people as part of their role. No other area of government spending does so.

Secondly, the desire not to contribute to state education, for example, or not to contribute to road building via taxes, is a political objection, not one based on conscience. There are very few areas where the claim of conscience is recognized in law. One is conscientious objection to military service, the right we are trying to extend to cope with the changed nature of warfare. Another is the right of Sikhs being exempt from wearing motorcycle helmets as this would force them to remove their turbans. Before capital punishment was abolished in the UK one also had the right to refuse to perform executions. We are not talking about political objections but those driven by conscience that also have a legislative precedent.

Thirdly, there is parliamentary precedent from the 1916 Military Service Act. This Act introduced military conscription for the majority but by establishing the right to conscientious objection also recognized the rights of a minority to not be complicit in killing. When conscientious objection was recognized in 1916, a form of "alternative service" was available to conscientious objectors, e.g. working for an ambulance



### Non-military security solutions:

peacebuilding alternatives  
to military responses

by Eufracia Taylor



Image Talk. Care. Heal. by Neal Jennings

Conscience has produced this report which can be downloaded from their website, [conscienceonline.org.uk](http://conscienceonline.org.uk).

service. That choice of alternative service is not available to objectors who are required to pay for the military regardless of matters of conscience. We are asking for a new form of alternative service: one that allows conscientious objectors to pay the military part of their taxes to a non-military fund and thus providing a means by which conscientious objectors can contribute to security and safety in good conscience.

Finally, because Peace Tax provides for a conscientiously acceptable—and more effective and efficient—alternative it has no negative impact on the government's job of providing security for the nation as a whole.

For more information on the UK campaign, contact: Conscience, 1b Waterlow Road, London. N19 5NJ, [info@conscienceonline.org.uk](mailto:info@conscienceonline.org.uk), or see [conscienceonline.org.uk](http://conscienceonline.org.uk). ●

## INTERNATIONAL NOTES

**Conscience and Peace Tax International (CPTI)**, an international peace movement seeking to direct taxes away from preparation for war and towards peace building, closed its office in Belgium and reestablished the organization in England. NWTRCC is a member. To learn about their work contact CPTI, 1 Oak Close, Thorpe-le-Soken, Clacton-on-Sea, CO16 0HU, United Kingdom, or see the website, <http://cpti.ws>.

**War Resisters' International** is holding an international conference in Cape Town, South Africa from July 4-8, 2014. Titled "Small Actions, Big Movements: the Continuum of Nonviolence," the conference is co-hosted by the Ceasefire Campaign. The focus is on the nonviolent resistance to all levels of violence, from small arms or domestic violence to resistance to war and international military alliances. For more information and to pre-register see <http://wri-irg.org/southafrica2014>. ●

## Tax Resistance Ideas and Actions

### New England Gathering

The chickens were busy scratching and pecking, while war tax resisters were busy putting people over weapons at the 28th Annual New England Regional Gathering of War Tax Resisters and Supporters at the Amazing Planet! Farm & Justice Center in Vermont, September 27-29. The location was amazingly beautiful, with colorful fall leaves and bright stars at night. It's also totally amazing that a loose connection of war tax resisters in New England has managed to pull off a gathering every year since 1985. At the end of each weekend they ask for volunteers to work on the next year's get-together, and somehow some collection of resisters comes together and pulls it off. Daniel Sicken and Susan Lannen are among those who get special credit for their hard work this year.

Cindy Sheehan spoke to a good crowd on Friday night about her life of activism since her son, Casey, was killed in Iraq in 2004. Her war tax resistance began right then and there and has continued despite collection efforts and being taken to court by the IRS. She's also running for governor of California (2014) and seems indefatigable.



Between sessions, l to r, Paula Rogge, Frances Crowe, Rick Gottesman, Ruth Benn, Joanne Sheehan. Photos by Ed Hedemann.

Cindy challenges each of us to work faster and harder for a world of peace, justice, environmental sustainability, and economic equality.

On Saturday morning Cindy joined a panel of war tax resisters who talked about the challenges of being a resister (and activist) in their personal lives and in relation to the people around them. Family members and friends do not always understand WTR, and economic pressures can bring up unexpected entanglements. The various

### Economic Disobedients continued from page 1



Daniel Sicken gets the program going at Maryhouse. Photo by Ed Hedemann.

was organized to buy back medical debt randomly (not for specific individuals) and then cancel it. They raised more than \$500,000 to buy back about \$12-\$13 million in debt—a symbolic but meaningful breach from the capitalist economy. The long-term goal is to build a debtors' union. When 1 million students are defaulting on their student loan debt but are not organized, there is no impact. If this was done collectively the landscape would be different. The U.S. government makes about \$51 billion from interest on student loans, but that money doesn't go back into education. It pays down the federal debt from wars, etc., and in that way subsidizes militarism and the banking system.

**Tom Gogan** described U.S. Labor Against the War (USLAW) as the voice of labor to the peace movement and the voice of peace in the labor movement. Labor unions started with economic disobedience, often by immigrant workers. Labor vs. capital—there is built in resistance if workers are going to get any justice. Most trade unionists don't see their power to change the world, although "solidarity" is working class resistance. USLAW had some success in getting a resolution against the Iraq War debated and passed on the floor of the AFL-CIO convention in 2005, but could not do the same in 2009 about the war in Afghanistan. USLAW is part of the New Priorities Network, because U.S. priorities are so skewed by the war economy. Within the peace movement it's important to talk about economic conversion—keeping workers working but building a grassroots movement to convert from the war economy. Unions have created alternative institutions like credit unions and some projects in affordable housing co-op construction. Especially at the local union level there is often a degree of democracy where members really have a say. Pension funds held by unions are also a target for action; within the unions that is happening here and there.

**Taleigh Smith** became a war tax resister the day the U.S. invaded Afghanistan. She was influenced by living in Nicaragua and working with street kids traumatized from the aftermath of U.S. military and economic intervention. Pastors for Peace is a very effective organization that uses civil disobedience to do good. We have the privilege of using civil disobedience so need to use it strategically, but campaigns need more than civil disobedience or personal moral action. If no one knows about it does it

## Tax Resistance Ideas and Actions

Panelists spoke of quitting jobs, dealing with adult children who are concerned about an aging parent, relationship problems—and how they've dealt with many of these issues and why they persist.

Small groups explored how we can be more supportive of each other given some of the struggles we heard about and those that we each have faced. Randy Kehler noted afterwards that one of the most supportive things to do was to come to the gatherings. No matter what the agenda is and how many workshops or panels are planned, the best part is seeing old friends, meeting new ones, sharing stories, and finding our way through these challenges together.

### On YouTube

In a previous issue we reported on the action by war tax resisters in Port Huron, Michigan, who celebrated July 4 by burning W-4 forms and encouraging others not to “pre-pay” for war. Now you can watch an edited video, complete with music, of their action. Click on the YouTube icon on the left side of [nwtrcc.org](http://nwtrcc.org), and look for the title, “Pray for Peace – Pay Tax for Peace.” You'll also find other videos related to military spending and war tax resistance. Be sure to send us links to videos that you think we should know about and add to our YouTube account.



Every year war tax resisters have a literature table with a penny poll at the Annual Progressive Festival in Petaluma, California, which is hosted by The Petaluma Progressives and Occupy Petaluma. Local activist Anita LaFollette reports that the tabling—and the festival—are very successful. “We would like to promote this festival in other areas. If anyone would like information on how to begin one then please contact me. It's so great!” she says. This year it was held on Sunday afternoon, September 15 in a local park with speakers, food, and tables for nonprofit groups. Email her at [alaf1141@sonic.net](mailto:alaf1141@sonic.net), or contact the NWTRCC office to reach her by phone. **Photo by Anita LaFollette.**

Ideas and Actions continued on page 7 →



Joanne Kennedy (right) speaks about Maryhouse and the Catholic Worker community during the opening session of the NWTRCC gathering. NWTRCC Coordinator Ruth Benn (left) and Social Media Consultant Erica Weiland introduced the program.

**Photo by Ed Hedemann.**

matter? Pastors for Peace uses the media well to promote their message, actions, and goals. If we resist to end war and have not ended war then we should ask what is the strategy to reach our goal. In the Bronx we are transitioning to economic democracy work in a community marginalized, imprisoned, stopped and frisked, criminalized—participating in democracy is almost disobedient. We can't just talk about what's happening abroad but must connect to here. If you want young people involved then you have to go where they are. Where are the churches—another group that should be more visible with war tax resistance.

Joanne Kennedy noted it's ingrained in Catholic Worker to be disobedient—we encourage people to be downwardly mobile. If you are in Catholic Worker you have already made a big transition. At times the community has a lot of money in the bank, but we refuse to accept interest. This leads to interesting discussions. The source of donations is scrutinized. Dorothy Day said you can't let the filthy rotten system change you. She totally opposed becoming a 501(c)3, and Catholic Worker refuses to have a relationship with the IRS. In the 1970s a bequest for \$100,000 was given to the Worker. The IRS said \$75,000 taxes were due but Dorothy refused. The press was with her and the IRS eventually backed down. Dorothy looked the IRS in the eye and she won. The community still refuses the federal excise tax on the telephone. In recent years student debt has had an impact on how long young people can stay in the community. We need a college level curriculum about how students will be “debt slaves,” and that it is possible to forge a path that is different; we can show a trail has been made.

Attendees at the Sunday Coordinating Committee meeting encourage local activists to reach out to “economic disobedience” allies in their communities. Hold a panel discussion like the one described here or join actions with those groups between now and our May meeting. Many other groups could be brought into the discussion: libertarians, “move the money” banking activists, draft registration resisters who can't get federal financial aid, bring our war dollars home campaigns, etc. Use your imagination and let us know what you are doing. ●

## Jam-Packed Agenda

**O**n November 3, the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee met. Yes, there is a reason for that long name! Coordinating Committee (CC) meetings are held twice a year in conjunction with our weekend gathering somewhere in the country, this time in New York City. The November meeting tends to be busy, because we have to pass a budget for the next fiscal year, which begins on December 1, and set objectives for the coming year. On top of that, this meeting was especially crowded with 10 proposals! It was nearly impossible to do justice to each proposal in our three-hour time slot Sunday morning, but each opened the door to some serious and exciting ideas for the coming months.

Hanging over the meeting was the fact of our flagging income, possible deficit for the third year in a row, and a budget proposal showing a deficit to cover our most basic work. Happily NWTRCC still has reserves from the Craigslist grant that surprised us in 2012 so we are not dead yet, but we left the meeting with resolve to find new sources of funding to keep us going beyond 2014. We were saved by a promise of a \$5,000 grant from a small and friendly foundation (to be named when the grant is received).

The group was impressed with Erica Weiland's report about her work as our **Social Media** Consultant and the energy that she is putting into this effort to reach a wider audience online. NWTRCC Coordinator Ruth Benn

proposed a reduction of five hours from her 25 hours a week, which the group approved and correspondingly shifted the five hours to Erica. She will work 10 hours a week for NWTRCC and add online fundraising to her tasks.

NWTRCC was founded as a coalition of dues-paying Affiliates. The CC accepted a proposal to seek **endorsing organizations** (no dues) to encourage a wider breadth of support for war tax resistance. Please suggest groups to us or ask for the letter and form to send to potential endorsers. Individuals in our network are creating a **new War Tax Resisters Penalty Fund**, because the longtime fund based in Indiana has become inactive. We agreed to send a letter to the NWTRCC mailing list promoting the fund. For information see [wtrpf.org](http://wtrpf.org) or write WTRPF, 1036 N. Niles Ave, South Bend, IN 46617. Another proposal, to develop a **national penny poll campaign**, was submitted by Bill Glassmire in Corvallis, Oregon. If you are interested in helping, please contact him through the NWTRCC office.

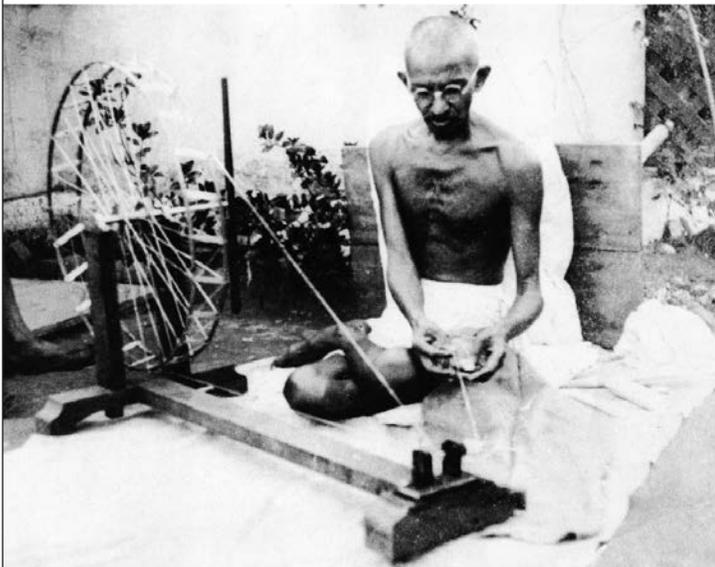
There was some frustration that the group did not accept proposals to fund a **traveling speaker** or **circuit rider** to carry the WTR message in face-to-face meetings around the country. Finances played a role in the hesitation, but the ideas were "sent back to committee" for further work and more specific plans to bring back to our May meeting. Local activists or those with contacts at colleges are encouraged to investigate potential hosts and financing for such a project. Karl Meyer generously offered room and board in Nashville for a Midwest engagement. The front page story on the **economic disobedience** panel ties into a proposal for local actions on this topic. The idea is referred back to Strategy Committee and to the grassroots to see if there is potential to build on this idea of making allies in a broader network of resistance activists.

By the end of the meeting we had passed a balanced budget of \$41,561 and left encouraged by these individual projects: Paula Rogge and Jerry Chernow's work on a new WTR documentary; Jason Rawn's independent traveling organizer project; and David Gross' coming book, *99 Tactics of Successful Tax Resistance Campaigns*. There's a lot happening, and we'll keep this newsletter coming to tell you about it!

In evaluation Karl Meyer said, "It was pretty tolerable for someone who hates meetings." So join us in May (location to be determined; offers welcome) and see what you think!

Find out more about the weekend and see more photos on our website: [nwtrcc.org/meetings.php](http://nwtrcc.org/meetings.php), and on our blog, [nwtrcc.org/blog](http://nwtrcc.org/blog). •

### Tactic #60: manufacture alternatives to taxed goods



*99 Tactics of Successful Tax Resistance Campaigns*

Look for it on Amazon or at your local bookseller starting in January 2014.

<http://sniggle.net/99Tactics>

Advertisement

### Social Media Champions Wanted!

Ty Hallock, founder and partner of TopFloorStudio, a web and communications consulting company, provided an excellent social media workshop at our May 2013 meeting in Asheville, North Carolina. He joined us in New York and is offering his pro bono services to help NWTRCC be more web savvy. We need 6-10 volunteers from around the country to get in on the ground floor of this new effort.

Ty will work closely with our Social Media Consultant Erica Weiland.

Contact her at [wartaxresister@nwtrcc.org](mailto:wartaxresister@nwtrcc.org) or by phone 206-498-7735 to sign up.

### The Lighter Side

Donald Kaufman in Newton, Kansas, reported his good luck at seeing the comedy “You Can’t Take It With You.” Written by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart, the play is set in the 1930s and was performed by Bethel College students. This classic comedy tells the story of the wildly eccentric Sycamore family, including Grandpa who has never paid income tax because he doesn’t believe in it. He feels that the government wouldn’t know what to do with the money if he paid it. Don says, “The drama is unique in that it deals with the

unpredictable realities of government, particularly the vagaries of the IRS. The grandfather is not perturbed by the frequent IRS notices and eventually resolves the problem by informing them that a person with the same name was deceased. Although this play does not deal with the ethical issues we face in resisting or refusing military taxes, it does have the merit of bringing the IRS into public discussion. I recommend seeing it if possible. It could help more of us to make the connections and resolve to do something about the unending coercion to pay for war.” ●

**Sallie Marx** continued from page 1

honor her legacy those of us in New York are dedicated to maintaining the Fund, and we encourage each of you to support the funds in our network. A list can be found at [nwtrcc.org/alternative\\_funds.php](http://nwtrcc.org/alternative_funds.php), or contact the

office for a copy by mail. Sallie was a great believer in pooling our resources and making collective—and public—redirections of resisted war taxes.  
—Ruth Benn

**Profile** continued from back page

destroyed “by mistake,” life in a refugee camp, ancient land stolen for a U.S. military base.

As a health worker, I am constantly reminded of the amazingly miraculous and utterly fragile nature of our bodies. It is so easy to kill, disable, torture, poison or instill long-term trauma in us. At the same time, love and support powerfully bolster our well-being as we navigate healing from agonizing experiences.

As a lifelong student of nonviolence, I have learned so much about the nature of violence and healing from GI resisters, vets working for peace, and lots of brothers and sisters in prison. Often, perpetrators of violence have also been victims of profound oppression and violence. In circles of deep respect and trust, we can slowly heal and reclaim our humanity and dignity, and make our way forward to authentic solidarity.

People who have perpetrated violence and take up healing have very special gifts as teachers of peace to offer to all of us.

In light of very real terrors and fundamental insecurities engendered by war, the economic insecurity in my life pales. So instead of choosing the false comfort of predictability, I choose the courage of active community solidarity through war tax resistance (among other strategies). I joyously choose to stand with peace workers of all nations, victims of war and systematic oppression everywhere, GI resisters and vets working for peace. I hope and endeavor that we may be able to inspire many, many more folks to join us in effective efforts to end war and heal the root causes of it. ●

*Ruby Phillips lives in Seattle and enjoys creating a world of sanity & respect with elders, queers, people living in prisons, vets & GI resisters, human rights activists, and other motley crew members of humanity.*

### Letters to the Editor

The arguments of Eric Laursen (“The Payroll Tax,” Oct-Nov 2013) are odd: he admits that Social Security monies go into the Treasury which disburses them currently for wars, but argues for keeping these payroll taxes. Thus, Laursen is not a war tax resister and is arguing contrary to our purpose. He perverts the acratik concept of mutual aid where he statifies it with the language: “state-run versions of mutual aid programs.” Followers in the tradition of Proudhon and Kropotkin never mean such a thing. And using money which is in the “magical” control of banksters—who shot Lincoln and JFK who threatened that control—essential to their...control of contemporary history, speaks for itself. Worst of all: he argues against non-state insurance schemes, such as Peacemakers attempted, in favor of the coercive kind, the strength of which he wants to maintain.

—Joffre Stewart, Chicago, Illinois

I’d like to comment on Randy Kehler’s article regarding Jim Douglass’ book: *JFK and the Unspeakable; Why He Died and Why it Matters*.

I regret that good minds and good intentions are spent on trying to find conspiracies regarding the death of JFK. I looked at the book index. It did not include any reference to Maj. Gen. Edwin A. Walker. Understanding the JFK assassination requires review of all the facts that we have. It is well documented that Oswald tried to shoot Edwin Walker, a right wing ex-army person, in April 1963, soon after he got his mail-order rifle. When Oswald went out to try to kill Walker, he left a list of eleven instructions for Marina which ended, “If I am alive and taken prisoner, the city jail is at the end of the bridge we always used to cross when we went to town.” Check the Warren Commission Report for a translation of this note, or Vincent Bugliosi’s book *Reclaiming History* (page 690 for the note). Bugliosi’s translation is better than the one in the Commission Report, in my opinion, but both tell the story. We need to give a lot of thought and effort to the issue of government secrecy and misbehavior. But trying to do that through poor research is not going to help.

—Ruth Paine, Santa Rosa, California

# Choosing Solidarity Over Comfort

By Ruby Phillips

Time passes quickly, and it's now been 30 years that I've refused to pay for U.S. military wars. I began to resist after a local war tax resistance volunteer attended a meeting at my workplace and introduced us to the practice and underlying philosophy of war tax resistance (WTR). Prior to his presentation, I had never heard of it; since then, I have been empowered by this way of life and cannot imagine returning to the excess obedience and internal denial of paying for war.

Not that this journey has been without inconvenience, anxiety or unexpected difficulty. The IRS has emptied three bank accounts; though fortunately they have not been successful in harvesting vast sums from their efforts. They have tried to garnish my wages at five jobs, necessitating reducing my paid hours to below the garnishable level. I can never own a house in my name without risking its confiscation.

Still, for me, war tax resistance has been a profoundly empowering expression of economic integrity. I can take full responsibility for stewarding the financial resources that pass through my life. Instead of paying for war, I joyously donate 10% of all earnings and gifts to organizations that support human empowerment and planetary sustainability. I also appreciate the conscientious and creative community economic practices that WTR necessitates.

Of course, I still bear responsibility for our government's war atrocities and military policies, since they are carried out in my name as a U.S. citizen.

A supportive friend asked me recently if I have regrets about walking this path of war tax resistance, since it has definitely required long-term instability in my work and economic uncertainty as I approach older years.



Photo courtesy of Ruby Phillips.

I certainly regret that I/we have not been able to inspire thousands and millions of U.S. citizens to resist war taxes, or otherwise to risk our comfort in support of our deepest values.

A much deeper regret is my generation's failure to stop or even abate our government's lethal policies, which have led to the death, disabling, torture, long-term poisoning, displacement, and occupation of millions of people on every continent.

In her latest book, *Drift*, Rachel Maddow articulates a history of U.S. military policy since 1960. Policymakers have systematically and successfully quarantined the realities of military life into a small segment of U.S. people, ensuring that most U.S. folks are not directly exposed to the devastating effects of war on GIs, veterans, and their families—let alone the effects on those at the receiving end of our policies: fear of death from the sky, constant visceral anxiety of living under occupation, grief and rage of losing a limb or a loved one, being raped by a U.S. soldier, depleted uranium or white phosphorus, a village

continued on page 7 →



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