

# War Tax Resisters Penalty Fund

February 2009

Appeal #42

**Total: \$10,089** (including \$300 postage and printing, \$200 to NWTRCC)

**Shares: \$33.63** (checks payable to WTRPF)

Number of active contributors: 300

Inactive members 360

Appeal #41: \$7373 requested

Total collected: \$6392 (87%)

The refusal to pay my taxes. ... is not a means. It is an end. I do not know if my refusal, and the refusal of others, will be effective in halting these wars. All I know is that it is worth doing. The alternative, a complacency bred from cynicism and despair, is worse. Refusing to actively resist injustice and flagrant violations of international law, refusing to attempt to turn back the tide of American tyranny, is surrender. It is the death of hope.

—*Christopher Hedges*

## Requests

**Elizabeth Atly of Portland, Oregon.** WTRPF included Elizabeth in the last appeal, but our mail to her was returned with a note that said, "Not deliverable as addressed. Unable to forward." If anyone has Elizabeth's new address or phone number, please call the fund at 260-982-2083 or send email [tojuliegarber@verizon.net](mailto:tojuliegarber@verizon.net).

**David Gross of San Francisco** publishes information about his tax resistance on a website. He says, "When the invasion of Iraq began, I stopped paying federal income tax and started working for my values instead of against them. I quit my job and deliberately reduced my income to the point where I no longer owe federal income tax. I transformed my life, concentrating on what really matters, so that I can live well and securely on a lower income. The IRS has so far collected **\$813** in statutory additions for 2005 and 2006. Read more about David's tax resistance at <http://sniggle.net/experiment/index.php>.

**Judy Scheckel of Burnsville, North Carolina**, who began tax resistance when she left her community in 1984, Sisters of Notre Dame, and retired from teaching. "The IRS has seized **\$1749** in penalties for tax years 1991 and 1992. In a letter of conscience, Judy wrote: "I cannot in conscience pay for war and killing, weapons and bombs, destruction of families and communities--these our federal taxes perpetuate. I have tried by the work I choose and the life style I have chosen, to, in a small way, create another reality in which violence and threat of violence are unimaginable and unuseful."

**Robert Randall is from Brunswick, Georgia.** He has been a very helpful member of the penalty fund over the years, cheering us on, making good suggestions, and pleading with us to work more speedily. He's not always successful, but we appreciate his good help. Robert's paycheck is being garnisheed to collect **\$7027** in interest and penalties on taxes withheld from 2001-2005. In an April 2006 letter to the IRS, Robert says, "Because the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and certain U.S. treaty obligations to honor the religious practices of its citizens require that I not be forced to violate my faith, I do not, 'to the best of my knowledge and belief,' owe any tax. Therefore, in order to be able to sign the attached tax return, which is required in order for you to consider it filed, I have left blank line 75, 'Amount you owe.' I do not owe you anything, for the government has provided me no way of paying taxes which does not violate my faith in God."

## WTRPF NEWS

Christopher Hedges writes a weekly editorial on a website called TruthDig.com. He gave us permission to reprint portions of his December 10, 2007 essay.

Acts of resistance are moral acts. They begin because people of conscience can no longer tolerate abuse and despotism. They are carried out not because they are effective but because they are right. Those who begin these acts are few in number and dismissed by the cynics who hide their fear behind their worldliness. Resistance is about affirming life in a world awash in death. It is the supreme act of faith, the highest form of spirituality. We remember and honor the names of those who, solitary when they began, defied their age. Henry David Thoreau. Jane Adams. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Mahatma Gandhi. Milovan Djilas. Andrei Sakharov. Martin Luther King. Vaclav Havel. Nelson Mandela. It is time to join them. They sacrificed their security and comfort, often spent time in jail and in some cases were killed. They understood that to live in the fullest sense of the word, to exist as free and independent human beings, meant to defy authority. When the dissident Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer was taken from his cell in a Nazi prison to the gallows, his last words were "this is for me the end, but also the beginning."

... Bonhoeffer, who returned to Germany from Union Theological Seminary in New York to fight the Nazis, knew that most of the citizens in his nation were complicit through their silence in a vast enterprise of death. He affirmed what we all must affirm. It did not mean he avoided death. It did not mean that he, as a distinct individual, survived. But he understood that his resistance, and even his death, was an act of love. He fought for the sanctity of life. He gave, even to those who did not join him, another narrative. His defiance condemned his executioners.

... Those who recognize the injustice of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and a war with Iran, who concede that these wars are not only a violation of international law but under the post-Nuremberg laws are defined as criminal wars of aggression, yet do nothing, have forfeited their rights as citizens. By allowing the status quo to go unchallenged they become agents of injustice. To do nothing is to do something. They practice a faux morality. They vent against war on the Internet or among themselves but do not resist. They take refuge in the conception of themselves as moderates. They stand on what they insist is the middle ground without realizing that the middle ground has shifted under us, that the old paradigm of left and right, liberal and conservative, is meaningless in a world where, to quote Immanuel Kant, those in power have embraced "a radical evil."

... We face a crisis. Our democratic institutions are being dismantled. We are headed for a state of perpetual war. We are paralyzed by fear. We will be stripped, if we do not resist, of our few remaining rights. To resist, while there is still time, is not only the highest form of spirituality but the highest form of patriotism. It is, if you care about what is worth protecting in this country, a moral imperative. There are hundreds of thousands who have died in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This number would be dwarfed by a war with Iran, which could ignite a regional inferno in the Middle East. Not a lot is being asked of us. Compare our potential sacrifices with what is being inflicted on and demanded of those trapped in the violence in Iraq, Afghanistan and soon, perhaps, Iran. Courage, as Aristotle wrote, is the highest of human virtues because without it we are unlikely to practice any other virtue. Once we find courage we find freedom.

See full text at [http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/20071210\\_why\\_we\\_resist](http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/20071210_why_we_resist).

**“Freedom of conscience” claim.** Dan Jenkins, whose appeal to the Supreme Court was dismissed without a hearing in October of 2007, is working with a group of military tax conscientious objectors from all parts of the United States and from different religious and ethical backgrounds in order to advance a 'freedom of conscience' claim for review under international human rights protections. For more information, contact Dan directly at [nyauri@gmail.com](mailto:nyauri@gmail.com).

**IRS seizes resisted taxes and penalties from Social Security paychecks.** Fund member Robin Harper notes that the "IRS can now routinely seize 15% of each Social Security paycheck of taxpayers who are deemed to have an unpaid tax liability. IRS has been employing this collection technique in my case since 2002." The Penalty Fund has helped resisters pay penalties and interest only. Harper asks whether we should consider assisting seniors who depend heavily, or solely, on their SS checks, with principle as well. If you are applying for assistance from the fund, please let us know if this is your situation.

**NWTRCC renews the War Tax Boycott.** NWTRCC is again asking war tax resisters to register their resistance activities at [www.wartaxboycott.org](http://www.wartaxboycott.org) to get a better picture of the number of people who are resisting and to amplify the voice of the movement. "The longer the list of public signers to the Boycott, the louder that shout becomes."

WTRPF Steering Committee: Cliff Kindy, Ken Brown, Mary Lutz, Leland Beery, Jeff Hunn, Julie Garber

**War Tax Resisters Penalty Fund**  
**PO Box 25**  
**North Manchester IN 46962**