

In a dark time the eye begins to see.

- Theodore Roethke

WAR TAX RESISTANCE

by Katrin Bridget Snow

You don't have to go to jail for resisting taxes. In fact, says Ann Huntwork, a member of Portland Peace Investors/Military Tax Resistance, Internal Revenue Service policy is to collect in any manner it can before prosecuting. The Huntworks have been resisting income taxes since 1975, and the IRS has gotten payment from them every year, eventually. But Ann, a medical social worker, and her husband, Bruce, a physician, still commit themselves to resisting payment each year. "If I'm not willing to make weapons," said Ann, "how can I pay for them? Working for a good world, and then using the money to destroy what you've built — it makes no sense." Her sentiments are echoed by an increasing number of tax resisters in the Portland area.

"Tax resistance is an opportunity for people to say they take their role as a citizen seriously and want to have a say in how the money is spent," said Genny Nelson, also a member of Portland Peace Investors. Working as she does in Portland's skid road area, Nelson has daily opportunity to see where that money is not spent. "So much money leaves the state of Oregon and never comes back here for human services. There is fifty percent unemployment in the Burnside area and no jobs. The elderly live on Social Security checks of around two hundred and fifty dollars per month. That is not based on day-to-day living for 1983. . . . To eat — that's not a right; it's a given. For me it's more of a contradiction not to do war tax resistance."

Tax resistance brings up a number of contradictions for Genny Nelson. While she now lives under the level of a taxable income, she earned enough money a couple of years ago to incur taxes. She filed a tax return with a letter stating her refusal to pay. Since then she has received numerous letters from the IRS requesting or demanding payment. The last one was a final notice before seizure, which means that the IRS can come at any time, without further notice, and seize any of Nelson's assets to pay her back taxes and late penalties. She doesn't have much money, but she is co-owner of a small business. Called "Sisters of the Road Cafe," her restaurant opened on NW 6th and Davis in the Burnside Community to provide cheap, good food, and a safe place for women to gather. Anyone is welcome, but no racism, sexism, or violence of any kind is allowed in the cafe. It is an important service to the community, but it may be in danger if the government comes after her taxes, taxes withheld because of her commitment to human services. Nelson said, "I have to ask myself every day if it's worth it to keep resisting, if I should pay and not increase the penalties."

The IRS has various methods of getting at your money. It will most likely put a lien on your wages, or checking or savings accounts. Both employer and bank have a legal obligation to comply, subtracting from your pay check or assets any money you owe the government. Last summer, for example, Molly Libby, a nursing student and Portland resident, had all but fifty dollars per week taken out of her wages to cover 1979 taxes. "This summer they will probably get 1980's taxes," she said. Being a nurse, however, Libby has strong reservations about

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"Vi vill fred - vi vill leva", en oljemålning av Cajé Huss och Mona Huss Wallin.

En protest för livet

A protest for life

"We will have peace, we will live", an oil painting by Cajé Huss and Mona Huss Wallin, is reprinted here from Sweden's oldest peace newspaper, PAX-News for Peace.

Translated into English, the inscription reads:

- The world's annual military budget is more than two hundred and eighty-five billion dollars.
- For only five percent of the military budget, undeveloped countries could do as follows:
- All children in Third World countries could be vaccinated against the most important diseases.
- Seven hundred million people could receive reading and writing instruction.
- A large part of the Third World could receive preventive medical care.
- Five hundred million people would be able to make a sufficient living from the earth.
- Three hundred million who now live in slums could get new dwellings.

Two hundred million undernourished children could receive extra rations.

Sixty million pregnant women who suffer undernourishment could be helped.

One hundred million new schoolhouses could be erected.

Everyone could drink and bathe in clean water.

An atomic submarine costs as much as it does to care for sixteen million children from the age of one year throughout their entire lives.

— translated from Swedish by Ben Lane



Two Lilies on Black

Nesbitt



SPRING

IN THIS ISSUE WE GREET SPRING WITH A FEW PAGES OF POETRY. WE ALSO HAVE A CALENDAR BY BARBARA GRANT, AND ONE OR TWO ARTICLES.

