

Report of Workshop No 1: Forms of Tax Resistance, and Actions

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Report: Gertie Brammer, Marya Nyland

One hour was spent listing forms of tax resistance. Result:

- earn so little that there is no tax to pay
- pay the military part of the taxes into a designated account
- pay the military part of the taxes into a fund dedicated to peaceful purposes
- wherever possible, retain the military proportion from VAT, e g with radio and television licence fees, phone bills, property tax, insurance premiums, road tax etc
- get your employer not to forward the relevant part of tax via PAYE
- refuse to pay all your income tax, or just the relevant part
- pay taxes in goods rather than money (rice was mentioned)
- don't pay your taxes but ask the tax office to come and collect them.

Whatever of this you put into practice, make sure the media know about it.

Following on this the 26 participants split into three sub-groups:

- 1 subject: which actions are possible? or: how to make the population aware
- 2 subject: how do we change legislation? or: becoming aware of the legal options
- 3 subject: differentiation between symbolic actions and refusal on the grounds of conscience

Results from Group 1: forms of action (report: Marya Nyland)

- Loonie*-research-poll (*or Euro, Dollar) = making the population more aware
- placards with comparisons between tax for war and tax for peace, for use at peace demos (for internal use of peace groups)
- establish a trust fund account for peace taxes and, punctually whenever taxes are due, send the media pamphlets
- all refusers send their Minister of Finance a letter giving reasons for their refusal; copies are retained and collected, and a "game" is developed using them, entitled "Dear Mr Minister of Finance"; aimed at churches and peace groups
- set up an e-mail register listing all refusers
- give a purple heart to all who were forced to pay, to demonstrate that they have been "injured" (only works if cameras are running)
- if it is impossible to retain income tax, deduct the relevant sum from VAT
- production of an international pamphlet (in several languages) with the most essential information; it should contain e-mail addresses
- set up an annual prize for tax resistance in the name of a well-known local tax refuser (e g "The Edith Adamson Award" in Canada)

Results from Group 2: legislation (report: Gertie Brammer)

The actual average sum that tax payers pay for war is estimated at around 500 Euros. Bearing this in mind it's hardly worth the effort to deduct tiny amounts from VAT unless, as a self-employed person, one can refuse to pay all income tax. Three serious possibilities:

- 1 **Work with the media**
Make it clear that a modern army no longer serves to defend its country, but to defend its economy. The costs have risen astronomically, the usefulness is minimal. Make clear what might be done instead with this money, and far more constructively: financing of UN, ZFD, development aid, health services, education; reshape the remainders of an army into an eco-army (help in catastrophes and preventative work)
- 2 **Lobbying** for the recognition of the torment of the conscience as a reason for refusing war taxes
- 3 work on **preparations for changes of legislation** in this sense.

Group 3 didn't eventually come off.