

## Part Two: Plenaries

### 2.1

#### The movement for a global justice ‘Another World is Possible’ and the peace movement

By John Van Daele (B)

##### I. Who is in this movement?

Let me start in Seattle at the end of 1999, which is the moment when the movement, that existed already, really came on the global scene because the media perceived it as a global movement which seemed to have one message, which seem to be united. Who were there?

**First of all: trade-union members**, from the USA in the first place, because people from the country where the movement is taking place are most numerous. Why were they there? People who have to earn a living from working, feel rather more powerless than 20 years ago in their relation with capital (than people who live from capital). They feel that capital is now free to move around the world to other countries and that they are loosing their jobs. They want to question this. The another thing is that they had the feeling that commercial rules in the world are very well protected, but not the social rules, e.g. the right to form a union or an association, which is a basic human right. E.g. in China, which is becoming a world production factory, (I was there three months ago) it is not possible to start a trade-union. If you work in a factory with 200 people you are in a stronger position if you can unite in a union. These two reasons (loosing jobs in their country and the denial of union rights) made that trade-unionists in Seattle and later in all other manifestations wanted to put these questions on the agenda

**A second group are the farmers.** I was in Cancun last year at the 5th ministerial meeting of the WTO (World Trade Organization), and there was a farmers’ leader of South-Korea who was in a manifestation: he took a knife, put it in his belly and he died. Very often in these kind of manifestations the most emotional people are farmers; they want to say: we have the feeling that because of the globalisation of trade in agricultural products only the most efficient farmers can survive. E.g. in the case of that South-Korean farmer: in South-Korea there are mainly small farmers; they can not have these big services so they feel they will disappear if you organize free trade. In Cancun many farmers had the same stories: we are not efficient enough as farmers and because of the free trade and we are disappearing. This is true for Belgium too. The question is: will Belgium still have farmers in 10 or 20 years?

**NGO’s working on development (north-south NGO’s).** An important example at that time the Jubilee 2000, a coalition of more than 1000 NGO’s from all over the world who were working on debt relief. They linked themselves to the old biblical tradition of debt relief every 50 years; at the beginning of a new millennium they felt it would be a good idea to free poor countries from the shackles of their debts. Also other development NGO’s have been very active in this movement because they feel that the IMF, WTO and the World Bank are too much organizing the world in favor of the rich countries.

**Fourth, the environment NGO’s.** Small and big NGO’s feel that their environment is being destroyed: green house problems, loss of biodiversity, and many other may be more local problems.

**Fifth, the organizations of indigenous peoples.** In Cancun you very often heard the same story. Indigenous people usually are not very well linked to government: they are a minority, have to some extent another culture, may speak another language, don’t know the tradition of policy making in their country, and very often their own government is making deals with multinational companies giving them the right to exploit a mine which destroys their habitat, pollute the rivers from which they live, ... They generally are in a weak position in their own country and their government doesn’t take enough into account their interests. Very often they are being sacrificed on the altar of globalisation.

**The sixth element are the “direct action people”.** Very often they are young people and during manifestations they have developed action techniques. E.g. in Seattle they had techniques to block in a more or less peaceful manner the entrance to the conference hall: ministers on the first day could not enter and, because anything happening in the USA gets anyway more attention than elsewhere, if they

could do it in Seattle with all those cameras there, it was a very good PR technique. That's what they have repeated in the years after because it proved to be a good way to play with the media society we know. If in a place with cameras you do something catchy, sexy, which can be shown on TV, it is a good way of raising some question. Of course there is the problem that TV's only show these so-called "fights" to block an entrance, because this is what can be shown, and often the content of the manifestation often is lost. That is the other side of this technique. In general these action people are a little bit younger than all the other ones I mentioned.

Of course there are other parts in this movement but these are the important ones. If you go to the world social forums, you will also see parliamentarians, you will see many local people. E.g. the last social forum in India was very Indian. My colleague told me that the flavor of the whole Forum in India was very different from the one in Brazil, just because of the place.

**So, it is a very diverse movement both for objectives/content and for the geographical spread.**

One could say that Europe is over-represented: unions, NGO's, etc. have more money to send people. North-America is there, but not so strongly represented as Europe. Latin America is strong also, because of the first forum and the strong tradition of trade unionists. If you think of the 3 billion people living in Asia, you cannot say that they are well represented as Europe. If you look at China... The last time I was there I was amazed that China has so many NGO's but they are local, and the government does not allow them to organize on a national level. Usually they don't have the resources to go abroad, although in Mumbai there were Chinese too. Africa is also underrepresented mainly because of money, I would say.

## II. What is this movement?

### A. Ideology

It is a little bit a cliché, but you could say that **they are questioning the neoliberal economics**. What does this mean? I mentioned already the movement of money. If money can move, it is stronger than labor which stays in the same place. If one has capital to invest one can look for the cheapest place. If your labor is expensive, one goes somewhere else. That is the power of capital: it is free to move. This has consequences: not only in the social field there is a tendency of the spiral downwards, the same holds for ecological rules: if a country put too many ecological rules, the company goes elsewhere. This is the equation the movement is questioning.

**This equation also has as consequence the trend toward uniformity:** if you produce soft drinks and you are already working on this for hundred years and you have a very famous brand and you have the right to enter any country, then you will destroy many small local soft drink producers. The diversity of products is being lost. The same with bakers. In Belgium we still have many bakers and there is a big diversity of bread. But the question is: how long will they survive if they have to compete with big supermarkets? Loss of diversity is a consequence of the large scale organization of the economy. In commercialization many values are being used as a means to sell products: e.g. I talked to someone in the publicity sector who was studying the markets in Kenya, Iran, and Brazil for Fanta. She had to discover in these countries which kind of symbols were linked to optimism, so that in selling Fanta they could link those symbols with that product. A big section in the movement is questioning this way of operating, this way of using traditions and values of people which have been developed and used for centuries, to sell products.

**The movement also questions the fact that democracy is put under pressure.** First of all, national governments have lost ground: in a global economy it is no longer easy for a government to say: we are organizing ourselves socially in such and such a way; because if they are too social, investors will go to another country with less social rules. The liberty of parliaments to legislate on social policy is diminished. Also on the international level the functioning of international organizations like the IMF or the WTO is questioned by the movement. Belgium for instance has one of the 24 directors on the board of the IMF, but I and Belgians in general do not know what this man is telling there in the name of Belgium. For instance, off the record some official told me that when Chile was starting to talk about a minimum wage, the Belgian representative very strongly criticized Chile's move for a minimum wage, while in Belgium for social protection we have had minimum wages for several years. So one can wonder in whose name that Belgian representative is saying that this minimum wage is a very bad idea for Chile. So the lack of transparency of these global institutions is a big problem for democracy and is therefore criticized by the movement.

**Another issue that is very much on the agenda is the inequality in the world.** We know how big it is and the movement is pointing the finger to neoliberal globalization saying it does not really help to make inequality smaller.

**B.** Inside these major basic trends/ideas there are **three streams about the question “What could be the answer to this?”** The first one is “Small is beautiful”, so let’s withdraw to our national or local society. Also economy should be more local again. The second one is ‘reform’: we should reform the world, there should be more social and ecological rules, there should be more redistribution of the wealth in the world, e.g. through taxes. The third answer/strategy is that we should have a different economy: a post-capitalist economy, but there is no agreement on what this really means. It is a rather vague idea that there should be another kind of economy.

**C. When you look at these different basis answers/strategies you also see different action methods, which more or less correspond to these basic strategies.**

The more anarchistic tendency will welcome local alternatives, of course, and also they will also have more destructive ways of taking action, although this is not the case for all people who are involved in this strategy, but some of them do.

Some post-capitalists are just in fact old communists, well they have that past but they prefer to call themselves post-capitalist: they are not much interested, for the time being, in reform.

The third basic strategy I mentioned was the reformists, and they really believe in talking with or within the global institutions. E.g. the international trade union organizations do not hesitate to dialogue with people of the IMF. Reformists also believe in elections and influencing global policy through national, and in our case, through European elections. They believe in influencing programs of political parties and in working through national policy in order to change global policy.

But very often it is recognized that different strategies can reinforce each other. Many say: while we are negotiating inside it is good that people are shouting outside. It makes our position stronger.

**D. Spirituality of the movement.** It is very diverse: you have Christians, socialists, either socio-democratic or of a more communist tendency, you have greens, you have Buddhists (although I haven’t seen so much of them). It is a very broad and diverse movement in this regards.

### **E. Organisation**

There are the World Social Forums (WSF). In the beginning this started as an answer to Davos, which has a World Economic Forum, but it grew and no one would have expected that in three years you would have hundred thousand people on the WSF. That’s why people said we should have a European, and an African, and an Asian SF, so that when people come together it is already a bit more organized. In Belgium we have had several Belgian Social Forums with the same basic movements, but I should say that in Belgium it was not a big success: it were mainly the professionals of the NGO’s and trade-unions who were there. You cannot say that it was a popular event.

At the WSF it is often difficult to have a common declaration at the end. The movement is so diverse that it is difficult to agree on common words and common sentences. That does not mean that it has not been able to organize anything. When I look at the manifestations on February 20, 2003, I think that has been the biggest peace manifestation on the planet and the WSF played a role in that protest against the war in Iraq. It was first proposed on the European SF in Firenze in November 2002, it was reinforced in the WSF of January 2003. That was the basic organizational structure that made it possible to have this big manifestation on the same day. This is the biggest practical realization of the movement against the war in Iraq.

In Belgium we have a Fiscal Action Network (FAN) which is a consequence of this movement. It is working on the Tobin Tax, on the shift from tax on labor to tax on pollution; it is also saying that tax after all is not such a bad thing: in neoliberal thinking tax is like a sin, while in Belgium people get very much in return: our health system and education system is very good and it is thanks to taxes. Participants in FAN are the trade-unions, environmental NGO’s, north-south NGO’s, Attac, and Network Vlaanderen. This Network Flanders is working on the conscientious/ethical use of money: what is the bank doing with your money? They had a campaign on the use of people’s money for bank investments in armament companies. Two or three months ago they found out that some banks are still

investing in landmines, while Belgium has been very active in the fight against landmines. Network Flanders discovered this and there has been a little uproar: banks were annoyed about it.

### **III. Money**

One of the organizations in this FAN is Attac, an organization which has been started in France in 1997. This brings us to money aspect of the movement. The word 'Attac' is an abbreviation of Association pour une taxe sur les transactions pour l'aide aux citoyens. It wants to charge a tax on the exchange of currency, a very small tax on money transfers abroad to be used for social objectives in the world. Why in 1997? Well, in that year we had the big financial crisis in Asia: Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, South-Korea, countries that saw the value of their currency being halved or worse. The consequence is that the debt of these countries has been doubled, many companies disappeared because they also saw their debt doubled and/or went bankrupt; many people lost their job. The criticism of Attac was that people and companies are playing and speculating with their money all the time by changing it from the Thai bath to the dollar to the yen and so on. Sometimes they made money from these speculative operations, but we also saw the financial crises. Therefore we thought that by taxing the exchanges of money a little bit we would be able to temper this speculative behavior. This was the basic idea of James Tobin who got the Nobel prize in 1981. Then Ignacio Ramonet, a director of *Le monde diplomatique* who started Attac in december 1997.

More generally Attac believes that the power of money in the world has become too big: the free movement of money can bring to much pressure on labor and the environmental rules, and it also gives more power to multinational organizations, including the power to stimulate a certain consumption model. We have a green house problem and at the same time people are bombarded to consume the whole time. All this was part of the ideology of Attac, one of the youngest associations of the movement for a global justice. As it started in France, it had more success in French speaking countries: Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, some North-African countries, but in the mean time it has spread to other places too.

Some of their ideas is that there should be global rules for money, that the income from capital should be taxed more. That would also offer some possibilities to lower taxes on labor.

### **IV. Link between the movement for a global justice and your organizations**

There is an evident link between the global movement and the peace movement, as mentioned earlier in connection with the world-wide manifestations of February 20, 2003. Furthermore, war is a very strong way of using power, the strongest way of using power on the international level. This movement is about power and the use of power. It is very obvious that organizations that question the phenomenon of power, almost naturally form a part of the movement for a global justice.

If we look more specifically at the question of taxation for weapon production, and the financing of war/defense, it is very useful that several organizations try to follow what is going on in the world of weapons, that there is information on this, what is the link with the weapons industry in politics, is there really a corruption of politics through weapons industry? It is very good that organizations look very closely at this link.

Another obvious link between your organizations and this global movement is that this movement is looking for more transparency of government policies, be it on the national or international level: what happens with people's tax money? This is also a natural question for the movement for a global justice itself. I do not know your organisations very well, but it obvious to me that what you are working on is almost naturally part of this global movement.

(Transcribed and edited from a tape recording by Dirk Panhuis)

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## 2.2

## Panel Discussion Focus, Variety, Change: the Future of the WTR-PTCs

## 2.2.1

### Focus, Variety and Change By Marian Franz (USA)

**Our fundamental focus and priority must always be the victims of military violence.** We speak on their behalf. They must be foremost in our thoughts as we lobby and plan our campaigns.

**Growth of Influence:** We have met together every two years since 1986. If we had not done so, there would be no CPTI, no consultative status with the United Nations, and there would be none of the surprises that we have experienced.

We have collectively dropped a pebble into the water. The concentric circles continue to form in ever expanding rings of influence. For us in the USA the movement began with the support coming mainly from the historic peace churches (Quakers, Mennonites, Church of the Brethren). Then the denominations with millions of members such as the Presbyterian Church the United Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ took formal actions of support. Later, groups who are not pacifist added their support. Even if they will never use the COMT provision of the bill, they view the legislation as a protection of freedom of religion.

There is a growth in the membership of the various organizations and an increase in the number of readers of our various newsletters. There are more organizations which openly endorse our movements. The boards of directors in our various organizations have grown to represent more religious, civil liberties and peace organizations. Boards gradually take more responsibility upon themselves, and are active in serving on various committees (outreach, finance, fund raising, lobbying, long-range planning, etc).

**Surprises:** By focusing on the victims of military violence we have encountered surprises along the way. For example, a New York City Council member is urging support for a "Resolution in support of the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Act." This resolution was an action that we did not plan, and has resulted in the formation of a New York City Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund. A number of local forums and panels have resulted.

**Successes:** In Italy, fourteen people who refused to pay the military portion of their tax were tried in court for inciting others not to pay. They were acquitted. The government appealed. They were acquitted again. Now campaigners against taxation for military purposes are able to make tax payments to one of four Italian non-governmental organizations actively working for peace in different parts of the world. Some Italian citizens pay the military portion of their tax directly to the National Bureau for Civil Service and Non-Violent Popular Defense. Italians attained this right through through the courts, not through legislation.

We have drawn attention to our cause and increased participation in religious, peace and civil liberties groups. CPTI has also won consultative status in the UN and gives yearly oral and written testimony before the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva. It also presents forums to NGO groups at the UN in New York City.

**Failures:** We have failed to pass peace tax legislation in any country. If I am correct, the greatest percentage of support from parliaments in 18% which was attained in the UK. (In the USA our peak is 13% in the House and 4% in the Senate). We have failed to end war. We have failed to stop the incursion into Iraq. Yet, because of us, the voice of conscience is heard.

**Changes along the way:** In the USA our peace tax fund legislation formerly told the government on where the war tax money of conscientious objector should go. We were told we were trying to do two things—to say where the money does not go and to say where the money does go—and that was one too many. The latest version of our legislation says that all of the money of conscientious objectors to military taxes can go to *anything but* any military purpose.

**Reaction to external events:** The terrorist attacks of September 2001 on New York City World Trade Center towers and on the Pentagon in Washington, DC have changed the mindset of our government and caused it to go to war even in spite of UN disapproval.

As a lobbyist I am still treated courteously on Capitol Hill offices of the US House and Senate. Three days after the terrorist attacks I returned to lobby members of Congress. In the office of one Republican member of Congress I was told that the wisest thing for me would to "keep quiet and lie low for a while." Nevertheless I continued to insist that there are reasons the conscience can forbid retaliation. The person then told me, "I want to take back what I said. You should keep talking. Just explain it to other people the way you explained it to me."

**The Future:** Military weapons kill in two ways. When they are used they maim and kill. Even if they are never used they have already killed because of the resources that have been diverted from housing, healing, education, and feeding the world's population, and thus preventing future wars. We need to focus on those victims who lack essentials because resources have been diverted to military spending.

Our focus will direct us to do *whatever* conveys our message and brings attention to the victims. We wake up each morning thinking about how to sensitise members of our parliaments and the public about the suffering caused by military violence. When we give clear voice to our own conscience, we cause people to examine theirs.

We still have a mountain to climb. In mountain climbing one foot is always securely placed. The other is always searching for higher ground. When the foot of action has found an effective place, the foot of our inward growth must search for higher ground because of the action. That contemplation prompts a new level of action. Those steps must be repeated to find advancement.

Again, our focus must always remain on the *victims* of military violence. They are the ones who prompt and direct the conscience. They quicken the conscience.

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## 2.2.2

**Focus, Variety and Change**

By Daniel Woodham (USA)

My name is Daniel Woodham and I am representing the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee (NWTRCC) of the USA. In the recent national meeting of NWTRCC in April of this year the question was posed what different war tax resisters would say first thing to the people here at the international gathering. Here are the responses:

- SORRY!
- HE'S NOT MY PRESIDENT!
- HELP!
- LIBERATE US FROM OUR OPPRESSOR!
- SEND IN THE U.N.!!

Though these comments are somewhat humorous they are also serious. Never before has one nation spent so much on war in such a short period of time as the US has since the beginning of the Iraq war. At the same time, never has the domestic situation in the US been so desperate concerning rising homelessness, unemployment, hunger, and people without access to health care and education. One might say the US is the wealthiest impoverished country on earth. Disparities between the rich and the poor are growing with each month and each tax cut for the wealthy. And perhaps not since the "Red Scare" of 1950s McCarthyism has the US curbed individual civil rights so much as it has under the Patriot Act and the Department of Homeland Security. Now even protesting in the street is in danger of being labelled as "terrorist activity".

**NEWS FLASH FROM THE USA:** The "War on Terror" is not working! There seems to be even more terrorism in the world today than before 9/11. Perhaps this means that solving the problem of violence with more violence is not effective.

There has never been a time in my generation riper for widespread war tax resistance as there is now. And it is in this context in a society as fearful and oppressed as the US is today that I base my comments about "Focus, Variety and Change" for this panel.

**FOCUS**

There are several points of focus of the war tax resistance (WTR) movement in the US today. One focus is about nurturing the international solidarity felt at this time in the world-wide peace community and creating a global movement for peace and justice in which WTR can play a part. There is also the focus of getting the idea of WTR into the mainstream and helping people in the US to understand the connection between paying their taxes and paying for war. Especially with the peace activist community, there is also a focus to get peace-working people to include some form of war tax resistance in their protest actions. After all, it makes sense that if one is working for peace then one should stop paying for war. Lastly, the ongoing legislative efforts of the Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund are a focus for many war tax resisters but Marion will be covering that subject.

The international solidarity and support experienced from groups around the world in the build-up to the Iraq War was a huge booster shot in the arm of the progressive movements in the US. One might even say it foreshadows a new age of progressive solidarity and collaboration, largely due to the use of the internet. Keeping this solidarity alive and thriving

is the first focus of WTR work in the USA. This conference feeds this focus as do the many websites set up by WTR-related groups. The interviews between people in the USA and other countries are also being conducted with the end of international connection and increased solidarity in mind. We hope to continue to find new ways to “increase the peace” internationally and some of the workshops will be focusing on this.

The second focus is WTR and the US mainstream. In reality there is a lack of knowledge of war tax resistance in the US population. Most have never heard of such an idea as not paying part or all of their taxes or, even if the notion has been proposed, there is general fear about losing one’s home, job, car, or even being sent to prison. Therefore local actions across the US focus on education about WTR through leafleting, street theatre, and public poll “penny polls” where people can vote how they would have their taxes spent if they had the chance to decide. These actions mostly take place on or around Tax Day which is about April 15 each year. This past Tax Day more than 50 actions took places in localities across the US.

The final focus I’ll cover is the work going on with other groups working for peace. There have been efforts for a few years now to spread the word about WTR at the annual protests seeking to close the School of the Americas. This is a military training school in Georgia which trains military personnel from other countries in torture techniques and counter-insurgency. Response has been good. Links are also increasing between the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), a peace action group which is a program of the Quakers, one of the traditional peace churches. They have a high-profile case at present because of supporting employees who refused to pay for war. I know where I have lived in Portland OR we have held joint actions with several other progressive groups on or around Tax Day. This is the case for several other local WTR groups as well.

## **CHANGE**

Much has changed in the US since 9/11/01 and WTR is also changing.

WTR in the US was at its height in popularity during the Vietnam War era and then also quite widely practiced during the 1980s Reagan era of the cold war and nuclear weapons build-up. But it took a long time to become popular during those times. It is only 2.5 years since 9/11 now and the present interest is already large. But this interest nationwide is sporadic and largely practiced by individuals not part of organized WTR groups.

Another element of change is that WTR in the US has entered the age of the internet. NWTRCC’s website has received tens of thousands of visits since 9/11, especially during the build-up to the war with Iraq and during the first month or so of the war. Discontent with the Bush administration and its policies has increased but WTR is difficult to convince people about, even those who work for peace.

The change in the level of fear in the US is another factor we must consider. Fear has been high in the US in recent times anyway but now the media is constantly talking about the “Orange alerts” issued by the Department of Homeland Security. These are publicized in the newspaper, the TV news, in the airports and even on public transportation in some cities. Thus the public is kept in fear and is more easily swayed to back the government and to not protest in any form, including WTR. Most people who have heard of doing WTR still have the idea that they will go to jail if they resist taxes conscientiously. In fact there are very few such cases of this type of prosecution in recent times.

There is also an increased polarization in the USA. More people are turning against Bush and even against the war in Iraq but continue to support him because of the idea that he



is President, the head of our government and is perhaps the only way to stop Al Qaeda. Facing a complicated military engagement in Iraq and a huge national debt, people remain mute, fearing perhaps horrible consequences for the US if we get rid of Bush and get out of Iraq. Many families have children or other relatives in the military and so do not protest the war for this as well.

To deal with these levels of polarization and the increased fear in the populace in general, a number of lower-risk WTR initiatives have come into being before and during the Iraq war. This included increased publicity about phone tax resistance (NWTRCC's "Hang up on War" campaign). Resisting token amounts from federal taxes was a strategy used as well -- (such as \$9.11 in the Axis of Peace Campaign in the NW USA or \$10.40 (the number of the federal income tax form) in the "Million Taxpayers for Peace" campaign nationally. This presidential campaign changed all previous campaigns with candidate Dennis Kucinich's statement that "Now is the time to outmode war". Though his campaign was grossly underrepresented by the popular media, this is the only time that a person running for such an office has publicly held this opinion. ([www.Kucinich.US](http://www.Kucinich.US))

**This news just in:** Julia Butterfly Hill won notoriety in the late 1990s helping to save old growth forests and this year, like singer Joan Baez protesting the Vietnam War in 1964, she became another high profile figure in resisting payment of about \$100,000 in federal taxes. She did this in conscientious protest over the Iraq War. Together with her group Circle of Life, NWTRCC has co-launched the "Activism is Patriotism" campaign. Because the collaboration is connected to a resource rich website and a mass publicity campaign between now and election time in November, they estimate 20 million people will be reached with access to info on WTR and other ways to make a difference in this election year in the US. (<[www.activismispatriotism.org](http://www.activismispatriotism.org)>).

## VARIETY

Variety is the name of the game in US WTR where a cultural plurality exists in many places already. Even though most people who engage in WTR are older and white, there seems to be growing interest amongst younger people, especially those that are white and entering the job market in some of the more progressive US cities. Thus there is variety in the ways people do WTR and also the ways WTR is publicized nationwide.

The different WTR initiatives which sprang up in the US in the build-up to the Iraq War and also during the war are newer low-risk campaigns for engaging in WTR for the first time.

Public information has become more widespread in recent times about how to do W-4 resistance so that tax monies are not withheld from one's pay check in the first place. The same forums have presented easy-to-use information on how to resist the federal tax on phone bills.

Some people who resisted only the military portion of the federal tax for several years have been pushed to resist payment of the entire federal tax since Bush instigated the Iraq war.

Tax Day actions in the last few years have received increased attention by local popular media as well as internet-based forums on some more widespread articles on WTR (One Yahoo forum, for example, had some 13,000 responses a few days after an AP article on WTR).

Many resisters in the US do not file their tax forms and try to remain as invisible as possible to avoid collection. This can work quite well if a person has their own business and does not make more money than poverty level wages each year "over the table" – this means less than \$7500. It is possible to be creative and barter for one's business services, to be paid

in cash or just to live simply and make do with less income. Not very easy in the US but possible.

Many resisters also file their tax forms without paying part or all of the tax. In this way they take part in the government's statute of limitations of ten years for collecting the unpaid tax (plus penalties and interest).

Many who resist paying for war also make use of escrow accounts (or "Peace Funds") for some or all of their redirected tax monies. This provides safety from collection by the IRS, keeps money accessible in case the resister decides to pay the IRS when threatened with collection, and most funds redirect the account's interest to peace and social justice concerns.

## **THE FUTURE**

With a view to the future it could be said that two things might be good to focus on in the US WTR movement. The first is to exercise CREATIVITY whenever possible. When creative street theatre action takes place and the press is alerted in advance, news coverage usually happens despite the press's usual conservative slant. Combined with offering informational workshops free to the public there is a potential for growing a small movement. People discover that WTR not only exists but they find the way that it can work for them. After all, when one's conscience rings a bell for change, the person is ready for change and will seek information wherever possible.

A second focus would be NETWORKING. As mentioned earlier there are many groups which are linking with the war tax resistance issue to take on growing militarism, readdressing the question of how to work against terrorism and getting rid of the non-elected US President Bush. If we can outline, perhaps in some of the workshops of this conference, some ways of increasing international networking, we will go far to creating the way to a more peaceful world without war.

**SOA (School of the Americas) Watch**

**Circle of Life (Julia Butterfly Hill's organization)**

**Possibly MoveOn.org (on-line activist group which seeks to dethrone Bush and was active before and after the Iraq War trying to stop it)**

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### **2.2.3**

#### **Focus, Variety and Change**

By Pedro Otaduy (Spain)

I am Pedro Otaduy, from Spain. First of all I want to introduce myself. I am a teacher in a secondary school. In 1983 I joined the Spanish Movement on Conscientious Objection (MOC), a well known group because it has supported the big struggle against compulsory military service in Spain. Finally, the insumisos (total resisters) defeated the army and in 1999 military service disappeared.

The first Campaign on War Tax Resistance was held in Spain in 1984. Next year I started working on this field and until now I have been working on it. You have already received a previous report about how we do tax resistance in Spain that surely you have read, so I will talk about other aspects of our campaign.

The Spanish War Tax Resistance campaign is not organised by a group in the traditional sense. We have no structures, no chair and no staff. We have a big support from the MOC but we can be considered independent. In Pamplona, the town where I live, four years ago we were five people working and I was the only member of the MOC. Now, the other four friends are active in other issues and we are six people, all of the members of the MOC.

Our campaign is quite well defined. You can see in our previous report how do we work in War Tax Resistance. Now I will talk about other aspects of our work.

We used to meet twice a year in a national assembly. In Autumn we put together the results of the previous campaign and start outlining the next one. In January or February we meet to decide about concrete aspects of the next one. We meet or, better said, we used to meet, because now, for the past two years, we have done this work by e-mail. It's not the same, I don't like it. I prefer to meet in person, face to face. But times are changing.

The most important decision to take is which will be our next collective project. It's a hard decision. We think that it could receive 30,000€ and we are not used to work with this amount of money. It's very little compared with military budgets, but too much compared with our budget. Sometimes we say that it is a little bit contradictory: we are few people, we deflect very little money, but we are nearly to die because our success.

Spanish Income Tax season goes from the middle of April to the end of June. Our campaign has three phases. First, before the income tax season is open, spreading ideas: we talk with mass media, we prepare press releases, we send information to tax resisters and groups closely linked to us. Second phase, during the income tax season, we do public office: we stay once a week in our office giving help to those people who want to do tax resistance. Third phase, after June, we collect the results of the campaign preparing statistics to be sent to mass media, tax resisters and other groups.

We have a clear problem: we manage to have contact with people that are already engaged (in antimilitarism or in other groups or issues as environment, social work, trade unions, internationalism,...) but it is very difficult for us to contact new people, that is, to the biggest part of the society.

I can give you an example: In Navarra thousand young people were *insumisos* (total resisters) against military service. More than five hundred spent 2 year, 4 month and 1 day in prison because of this. But we have never been more than two hundred tax resisters in Navarra. That is: there were families that had their son in prison and meanwhile still paying for military without any kind of resistance. Why?

We find two reasons: fear to the Inland Revenue Service (IRS) and the opinion that this is a way that will not bring us to the end of armies.

To be afraid of the IRS is logical: what we propose to do is quite serious. We say to the government that we don't agree with it. And that has its importance. That is why we propose it. And there is another thing: perhaps more than fear is just comfort. If we don't do anything we will have less troubles.

To say that by this way we will not reach our purposes is hard to hear. *Insumisos* (total resisters) showed us that is really possible to defeat the government by means of non-violent civil disobedience. We can not do civil disobedience on tax issues, but it is very important to be critical of the military budget. And the non co-operation that we propose has a big value in this way.

It's important to insist on this criticism. We are in campaign from April to June, but during all the year we have to be active. We have to be able to use tax resistance as a support of our

criticism. We think that we have the right to refuse military expenditure and we are not few people, we are all the tax resisters and supporters that we have.

These are the ideas that we have in Spain when doing our work. You have seen: I have not even mentioned a legislative work. At the moment we don't do any work in the legislative field. We had a very bad experience with the law on Conscientious Objection (1983). It was really bad. But we were able to prepare a strategy against it and finally we won. In 1999, with the law, Spanish military compulsory service disappeared. Some day we will have to deal with this issue. I think that it will be in a long time. But we have something clear: The law must suppose a real reduction of military budgets.

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## 2.2.4

### **Focus, variety, change** By Bart Horeman (Netherlands)

The Dutch war tax resistance movement started in the 1980s. At that time half of the Dutch population was affected by a disease called Hollanditis, according to the outside world. They were against the stationing of US nuclear missiles on Dutch territory and had huge campaign against this government decision. On this wave of Hollanditis the war tax resistance movement grew enormously.

Around 1986 the movement had its height; we had some 3000 donors supporting us. The focus of the movement was to get political pressure by organising war tax resistance-actions. The actions were a means to raise awareness in the broader public. One of the most widespread actions was to refuse to pay part of the taxes on the gas bills. At that time all the gas came from state owned energy companies. When these companies decided to cut people from the gas because they hadn't fully paid their bills, it usually led to much publicity and a public outcry: how can you cut these people from their energy supply if they are protesting against war?

In those years the movement had its successes. As a result of the widespread war tax resistance and to prevent themselves to have to take unpopular measurements like cutting them from the gas supply, several local municipalities decided to install peace funds to give the war tax resisters a legal means to divert part of their taxes to these local peace funds.

At the end of the 1980s the movement started to decline when government decided to have the nuclear missiles. Also the local regulations for war tax resistance were dismissed by the national government that decided they should be reversed. Meanwhile a group outside the organisation of war tax resistance worked on a law proposal which appeared in 1988 and was amended in 1992.

Another setback was a change in the policy of government repression of war tax resisters. The Netherlands has a 500 year history of tax resistance and so the Dutch government has a 500 year experience of how to deal with it. In the 1980s government used the 'normal' method of a public auction to get the war tax resisters' withheld war taxes. And the war tax resistance movement used these auctions as a public feast to get much publicity. In the beginning of the 1990s this changed and the public auctions stopped as government tried to get the taxes in more invisible ways, like robbing one's bank accounts or even one's salary.

The focus of the movement remained on awareness raising, mainly advocating symbolic war tax resistance actions, like withholding a very small amount.

At the end of the 1990s the focus changed away from war tax resistance actions to actions to press the government to spend more on peace building activities. In 2000 started a large campaign called “Release money for non-violence” demanding the government to spend money on peace building initiatives in stead of on the military. At the moment the Dutch government spends quite a lot of money for peace building in a non-military way, but it could be much more. In the last years the focus has even further shifted away from only taxes and also started to look more into how every person contributes to violent conflict and war as consumer and taxpayer. We have started a campaign called the ‘Clean Handshake’ following the model of the ecological footprint, trying to raise awareness on how all aspects in life may relate to wars around the globe, e.g. through questions like: do you use a mobile phone which has coltan in it coming from a conflict area?

In the course of the years in the Netherlands we learned various lessons which may be of interest to other national organisations:

- if you do not want to pay for war, you need to withhold or redirect ALL your taxes, not just the percentage that goes to the military. This was said by a judge in the case of a war tax resister, when the judge asked: I do not understand why you want to withhold a part of your taxes, because how can you be certain that money from the remainder will not end up in the military budget? A similar lesson was learned in the US.
- in order to achieve legal recognition, one needs to compromise to the extent that only individual freedom of conscience can be achieved. Any attempt to achieve that part of your taxes are redirected to certain purposes (peace-building and the like) will conflict with the budget-right of the parliament. This is also similar to the US lessons learned. The bills that did not succeed in getting adopted, lacked this insight, and if they had had, they would have had much chance of getting passed.
- many of our supporters, although sympathetic to our cause, are not 100 percent against the military. After the end of the cold war, the military have successfully acquired “peace missions” as a legitimate reason of existence. Many of our supporters are not in principle against the idea of military peace keeping missions.
- at this moment the Dutch government spends far more on peace building initiatives than 20 years ago, and much more than the total amount of taxes that war tax resisters would want to redirect.
- in government income, there is a considerable shift from income tax (direct taxes) to the indirect taxes (Value Added Tax (VAT)).

As a positive conclusion: we managed to survive and we still have some 1000 donors supporting us, but there is a constant challenge to keep renewing our organisation, because slowly our supporters are dying and we need to attract and to listen to new (young) people.

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## 2.3

**Panel “Voices from the South”**

## 2.3.1

**Introduction**

In the past some participants from the South have attended our conferences: mainly from Central-America and Asia, and since the 2002 conference also from Africa. Of course their concerns are different from ours, but we have also something in common: death and taxes. Western participants have been discussing their concerns at previous conferences. This time we want to listen in a more systematic way to the experience of people from the South and hear from which perspective they look at issues of war and taxes.

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## 2.3.2

**Voice from Ghana**

By Michael K. Badasu

I am Michael Badasu from the Ghana Mennonite Church Youth Peacekeeping Organization. We are connected to the church, but not all members of the church are members of the Youth Peacekeeping Organization, and this organization also has Muslims and other non-Christian members. The Ghana Mennonite Church is our main sponsor. We also receive contributions from our members and from abroad (Germany).

**Refugees**

We work for refugees from other parts of Africa. Ghana has about 10 refugee camps. We decided to help one of those camps (700 refugees) and collected food items in agreement with government officials.

Our major purpose is to promote peace among Africans, because for lack of peace people from other parts of Africa are now in Ghana as refugees. We started talking to them about means to avoid war in our countries.

We also support refugees who have no home in Ghana. Because some of them don't have documents, they are not allowed in a camp and stay somewhere in the city. We help them to find a place to stay. We have a particular attention of orphans and street children (often 5-10 years old).

**Youth**

Our organisation has a program for training youth in skills, particularly dress-making, carpentry and batik dye. Many youth come from the country side to enjoy city life without any skills. We try to give them a skill so that they can go back to their village and start making a life. Life in the city without a job is terrible. They are eager to get some training. According to statistics some 70% of the youth are unemployed. Some don't eat on certain days for lack of money. Some sleep on the street. The same lack of skills, money and home applies to refugees. Sometimes we receive some money for shelter and food. Some food comes from a farm we have in the country side (coco, maiz, ...). Some congregations help us. But often as a pastor I am over-asked by other congregations who want to help refugees.

### **Skills**

We want to have workshop for some of our youths. We have acquired two plots of land for building, to put up a workshop for youth who are interested in learning. Four persons are there already to facilitate the training in carpentry, dress making and batik dye. When the youth go there they'll learn a skill and will be able later to work self employed.

### **Broken families and robbery**

We also want to help orphans or women with children: very often because of hardship the husband runs away from home and leave his family behind. Some women even kill themselves in such a situation. We send orphans to a home (orphanage) of our church.

We also try to reduce armed robbery. Youth left by their parents tend to become robbers because they don't have a meaningful job or a home. They turn to bad company. We talk a lot to robbers (particularly to those not caught by the police) and try to convince them that their practice is bad, and to learn a job so that they will not have to rob.

### **Aids**

Because of their hardship girls tend to be prostitutes and sometimes get aids. Prevention of prostitution and aids is also one of our objectives. Six weeks ago we organized a workshop (through the Christian Council of Ghana) on HIV-aids. Before marrying youth are asked to prove through an official hospital doctor they are free of HIV. The government does a lot, but needs the help of the churches.

### **School**

With foreign Mennonite help we also built a three classroom school for children who had to walk too far to another school. Now we have 115 children and four teachers there. But we have to build toilets (also because it is a government requirement): that's what we are doing now and we hope to finish those toilets by the end of September.

I am glad that here at this conference I met Nana-Fosu Randall who is working for a school in Ghana and who will be in Ghana next December. We share each others' views.

(transcribed and edited from a tape recording by Dirk Panhuis)

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### **2.3.3**

#### **Voice from India**

By Arya B. Bhardwaj

I have been associated with this movement for some time and some of you have visited me in Delhi in 1998 at the seventh conference. My wish is not to make speeches. I would rather answer your questions about India.

Daniel Woodham (USA): What is the role of Gandhian peace workers in peace movements today?

A. B.: There is no special role. They are working on how non-violence can be a social instrument of governing our sense. So, peace is very much a center point of our work.

Daniel Woodham (USA): More specifically, we hear about conflicts in India (Gurajat, Kashmir, ..), but not about grass-roots movements for peace that may be existing in those regions.

A.B.: We are fed up with media: we are fed with media and we are fed up with media. It is natural that you know what the media are telling you. But it is not the real picture they are giving. We are fighting at the grass-roots also in those regions like Gujarat. Indeed communal violence is very common. In the Sarvodyan movement (started by Gandhi in recent times although it is a very old word from the Veda's) we try to make ordinary people understand that the present socio-political systems we live in, are not for the good of all. *Sarvodya* means 'good of all'. It is no use to criticize a government. Government is run by a system. This is a very deep question and now it is a good thing that it is not confined to one country and that it is becoming global. There are people who are working at the grass-roots and do not publicize either what they are doing, because the publicity instruments are in the hands of western interests.

Klaus Ehrler (Germany): A UN Trust Fund for Preventive Action was founded Gro H. Brundtland and is supported by the Secretary General of the UN, Kofi Annan. Only 13 UN member states support it. Do you suppose that your government after the elections would be ready to draft an UN G.A. resolution to stimulate the UN members states to support this Trust Fund? The secretary-general in his peace report of 2001 had drafted a peace program so as to make him more independent from the big powers, or from the only big power. It would be very important that wider support for this Trust Fund would help prevent war and injustice, injustice being the major root for war. Would a big country like India, in the tradition of M. Gandhi, P. Nehru, and Indira Gandhi, be willing to support such an initiative?

A.B.: This is a very big question. I cannot speak for the government for I have never been on government funds, not in a government organization. We work at the people's level. You are right: this resolution is important, but the role of the UN is to make all of us think, and secondly the Indian government is a puppet of the USA. There is the European Union which is slowly becoming on the same level of the USA and that's a healthy sign, but our government is a puppet of the USA. Still, it is a good initiative and it must be supported.

David Bassett (USA): First I want to go back to the general media and any words published. Gandhi's words had a considerable role in informing and motivating his followers through media or modalities he had. Would you comment on this? One of the interpretations of what you are saying is: Words on paper have little use; what is needed is action to be seen and to help people. Are you saying that? Or is it that words (Gandhi's or Sarvodayan words) published through some modality are really helpful?

Second question. Would want to tell us in a nutshell what you mean by "Democracy on Dialysis: What Next?" (your booklet I picked up on the table)

A.B.: You brought up a big question. It is a real Pandora's box and I did not want to open it. But the crux is there: we cannot have another way unless we try to understand why we are faced with the problems around us. My humble thinking in this book is: the so-called democratic system that has been operating on you also and in India also, how could real democracy survive if the principle being practices today in the name of democracy are not changed? Democracy is: how to respect others and particularly those with whom I do not agree? Now, if you go into detail: the first thing of politicians is how to shut up people's mouths. We just had elections. What was the crux of the whole game? The leaders of party A used 90% of their time to abuse parties B, C, D, E, and F. And so did the leaders of party B, etc. How could we be able to gather power to be positive? This is the main problem humanity if facing. Why does the problem exist? We do not try to put our mind. You have been working for this WTR and PT. War is the weapon of democracy. If we are not able to change the system, our efforts will bear little fruit. That's why I wrote this small book *Democracy on Dialysis: What's Next?*. This is not my question. (I am a small fry.) It is a question of Gandhi



asking today from all the people (not only Indians, because Gandhi never worked only for India). He himself said when he was asked: what is your policy? He said: Life of all those who live on this globe is my politics.

(transcribed and edited from a tape recording by Dirk Panhuis)

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#### 2.3.4

### **Voice from Columbia**

By Ricardo Esquivia Ballestas

#### **The country**

You may not know much about Columbia. You may only hear the information and disinformation given by the media presenting Columbia as a drug cartel and a country of violence. Let me tell you a bit about Columbia, a country in the Andes with 45 million inhabitants, an interesting mixture of peoples. One percent are indigenous people, 30-35% are of African descent, 40 % is a mixture, and the rest are Europeans and Arabs and Chinese. These people constitute the richness of the country: they struggle, they advance, they create hope. Columbia is a rich country like most countries, but has been mismanaged and finds itself in a difficult situation. We have been in a war situation for some 50 years. We have the oldest and biggest guerrilla movement in Latin America, the FARC, and various other groups. In Columbia 68% of the people live in absolute poverty of which 25 % in miserable circumstances. Unemployment goes from 20% in some villages and cities to 95% in the country side. People loose faith in government; and because they don't trust the government, they don't denounce, and if they don't denounce, the impunity is high. People start to take justice in their own hands, first in the "autodefensas campesinas"; later a "liberal" guerrilla, and then the Marxist guerrilla FARC, which now is a real army. These groups need money to finance their wars. They turn to wealthy people, and if these don't pay they kidnap them en even eliminate them. That makes that these wealthy industrials and cattle farmers organize their own army, because they think that the national army is unable to defend them. They create "autodefensas" who unite with the army and in this manner appear the "paramilitary". Add to that the national army and other groups, and you have a country in war. This war completely affects the civil society. An African proverb says: When two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers. In our case we have some 3,5 million displaced persons. Columbia is the second country in the world in this respect. The vast majority of these people are from the country side who flee to the cities. As there is nothing to eat in the cities, they turn into living dead. The youths turn to prostitution, gangs, and begging. In this ways the cities become impossible to live in, and grow. E.g. Bogotá had 1,2 million inhabitants 35 years ago; today 8 million. In addition to the displaced persons, there are 30.000 dead per year. According to UN figures Columbia is one of the most violent countries in the world. In addition there is the economic situation with the opening of the borders: US and Canadian agricultural products invade our market and have ruined our farmers, because the Columbian agriculture cannot compete with the USA or Canada.. Furthermore the Columbian agriculture is not subsidized like the one in the USA. All this has led to a lot uncertainty. Then people start cultivating something that cannot be cultivated in the USA: coca. The international mafia transferred their production of coca from Bolivia and Peru to Columbia, taking advantage of the social disorder and war. In this way the narcotraffic becomes part of the Columbian conflict. It finances the guerrilla. That's why the government could not destroy the guerrilla: it finances

itself. In the same way narcotraffics corrupts the army, the “autodefensas”, the government, and society. It also gave the government of the USA a pretext to intervene in the name of the fight against drugs. Leaving aside Iraq and Afghanistan Columbia is the third country after Israel and Egypt in receiving military assistance from the USA. Through the CP (Columbia Plan) the USA gave 3,7 billion dollars to Colombian government for its fight against the guerrilla. They don't give it in money but in armaments and personnel. They try to eradicate the drug traffic and the coca, but they don't see it as a social problem but as a criminal activity of the farmers. That's why they fumigate the crops permanently from the air thereby also fumigating the people, the water, and the Amazon forest (which constitutes 66% of Columbia). All this affects the country. Last year 47 ministers of our Mennonite church were killed, 300 churches closed by the army prohibiting worship. Other groups are even more severely affected by the whole situation. The government thinks that by more pressure they can terminate the guerrilla.

### **Peace work**

Many people feel hopeless. But, as I said in the beginning, the Columbian people are also very creative, with their intelligence, like most of the peoples. They have faith and hope. In several ways they are creating peace. In those groups there is the “social peace movement”: various church and non-church groups that have united to create peace in Columbia. I belong to the Mennonite church and to do this work we have to believe in something. We work from this perspective. After analysis we see various elements we have to deal with.

**For one, we have to take away the ideology of war;** that means: we have to make the people (inside and outside the army) stop believing in the army as a means of conflict resolution, as a factor of social change. That's why we work a lot in education for non-violence and human rights. That works enables us to build bridges between different groups in the country. We help the government in negotiations. Personally I sit at the negotiation table with the army and paramilitary. It is big education movement in high schools and universities. We work with groups that leave the guerrilla, with some interested military groups.

**Another element is that we have to get the people away from the war,** we have to stop them being used as cannon fodder. For that we work on human rights, nonviolence, and conscientious objection to compulsory military service. Fifteen years ago this was a small enterprise of the Mennonite church, but now it is a much wider movement throughout the country. Many young people are interested, because many of the 30.000 dead a year are youngsters who are attracted by a job in the military, paramilitary, guerrilla, or drugs. To be successful we have to do more than work on ideology or give workshops: we work for an integrated and sustainable human development based on social justice. Peace is not a pact, peace is development and education and a flourishing human life. We want our people to stop begging; we want to be independent from the market of charity of the North. We want to work for our own development and be conscious of our dignity..

**We also have to take the money away from the war.** We are talking about a lot of money. Particularly the present government is spending huge amounts, saying they can beat the guerrilla; they are convincing the people that security is offered by a good army. That's why we have developed a strong campaign of “objeción fiscal”; we call it: “No more taxes for war and investment in peace”. It is a bit difficult because in Latin America many people don't pay taxes. In Columbia the government obtains money through indirect taxes (VAT: value added tax). Only the rich have to pay taxes, but they are tax evaders. We pay when we make an

international phone call, when we buy a drink, when we go to see football. We are searching how to find a way to tackle that fiscal objection. For that reason I feel very blessed for being here with you asking you to help us think on how to work something out to make that those taxes are not used for war. An additional problem is that our taxes are very limited, but the taxes of the North-Americans are huge. With their tax money they are sending us 3500 billion dollars. They don't pay cash because that wouldn't help us, but through business deals they send arms. Therefore we unite, because the North is invading the South with their taxes for our death. It is very important to have this meeting place here with you in the North, to inspire and help us, to find allies in this society. Our campaign started three years ago, we organized some forums, and worked on this. How can we strengthen human solidarity? We insist on spirituality, not only religion, but more than that, on spirituality. In this way we work for an education that changes human beings and, through them, impregnates society. We understand that it is a political and social, and we make progress.

### **Cooperation on war tax**

I have been thinking of a conference like this in Columbia, but I see that that would be a mistake, not only because few people would go to Columbia, but mainly because we are not being killed by Columbian taxes but by the taxes paid in the North and therefore you have to hold your conferences in the North. I could make a different proposal. A small committee could follow up this question, explore the situation, go to Columbia, integrate the knowledge, wisdom, and possibilities you have. Then we can have a dialogue of cultures. This gives you something to do between two conferences. You could visit us, not all of you, but a small group, and we would have an occasion to organize a conference on war tax resistance in Columbia. Your presence in Columbia would allow us to invite the press. Because you are important, they would come and listen. Our campaign would have a greater repercussion.

So, you organize your next conference in the North and you connect with the South through that reflection and coordinating committee that we could form.

I would like to thank you again. You are very important for us in Columbia and in the South. In our struggle against powers we need allies within those powers. The imperial citizenship you have is fundamental. Sometimes you despise it, but it is fundamental for our work: we need allies in the North, not to give us money. Let us stop thinking "Those poor people, we have to give them money". Give us dignity, give us political support. Translate your documents in Spanish, French, and other languages and send them. That's a way to liberate us. Thank you, brothers and sisters. God bless you.

(transcribed, translated and edited from a tape recording by Dirk Panhuis)

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## **2.4**

### **Supporting Colombian National Conference on War Tax Resistance**

*On Saturday afternoon, July 10 the plenary heard people from Ghana, India and Colombia. Ricardo Esquivia, from Colombia, proposed us to help them in a research work about the real cost of the war in Colombia. The Assembly considered this proposal as very interesting and on the same evening, a working group met with Ricardo in order to outline the work that should be done if the proposal was accepted. On Sunday morning, it was proposed once again, in a more formal way, to the Plenary. The proposal was as follows:*

Colombia is suffering a war where four different armies are fighting: governmental army, guerrilla, paramilitary forces and narcotraffic forces. The Colombian Government has the help of countries from the North, especially USA which gives 3,7 billion dollars in three years in military help.

The war is not only paid by USA's tax payers, but also by the people from Colombia as well: they have some special taxes for paying the army.

People from Colombia want to promote war tax resistance to military in their country. They have joined in the Colombian National Conference on War Tax Resistance. Among the tasks they have proposed for themselves, they want to show all the people of their country what is the real cost of the war: the cost of arms and their direct consequences in terms of suffering, but also the social cost incurred by all this money going to the military instead of to the social needs.

They want to start a research work in two phases that would take about a year time. First, they want to find and collect real numbers about the war and later, they would present these data to all the Colombian society in a national conference.

They want our help for both phases. In the first one, we should give them help linking with some institutes and people from the North who are experts in this kind of work (i.e., SIPRI, World Watch Institute, etc...). And in the second one, they would like to have some people on behalf of our groups (Conference and CPTI) in Colombia itself when they will present the results of the research in a national conference which would take place in October-November 2005.

**So the proposal to the Plenary of the Conference is:**

To accept our participation in this research work, helping the Colombian National Conference on War Tax Resistance. For the first phase of the work, a small co-ordinating committee should be defined between us to ensure the follow-up of our decision. For the second one, we would select and finance a team of three people to go to Colombia for the presentation conference that will take place there in autumn 2005. Such a representation to the national conference that would be organised by Colombian National Conference on War Tax Resistance would also be on behalf of CPTI.

The cost that we foresee for this project is about 10,000 USA \$ (8,500 € more or less). For this purpose, all the participants of the WTR-PTC Conference should assume that we will need a special fund raising effort, because the budget of CPTI doesn't allow for this economical support. In this cost, we take into account the research work, including if necessary the work of an economist to analyse the data we gather, and the trip and stay of three people to Colombia for a week when the conference takes place.

*After a short discussion (all the people agreed) the proposal was accepted. The small committee that will co-ordinate this work with Ricardo was formed by Daniel Woodham (NWTRCC, USA) and Pedro Otaduy (COF, Spain, and CPTI), present at the plenary, and Derek Brett (Switzerland, CPTI) who was absent at this moment but was subsequently co-opted afterwards. David Basset (NCPTF, USA) and Dirk Panhuis (VRAK, Belgium, and CPTI) will be part of this committee too. Daniel will be the co-ordinator.*

## **Apoyo a la Conferencia Nacional de Objeción Fiscal de Colombia**

*El sábado 10 de julio, a la tarde, tuvimos la ocasión de escuchar en el plenario a gente de Ghana, India y Colombia. Este último nos propuso ayudarles en un trabajo de investigación sobre el verdadero costo de la guerra en Colombia. La Asamblea lo consideró interesante y*

*un grupo de trabajo se reunió esa misma noche junto con Ricardo para diseñar el trabajo que se podría hacer si la propuesta se aceptara. La mañana siguiente se propuso ahora más formalmente al Plenario. La propuesta era la siguiente:*

Colombia sufre una guerra en la que luchan cuatro ejércitos: el gubernamental, la guerrilla, los paramilitares y los grupos del narcotráfico. El gobierno colombiano recibe la ayuda del Norte, especialmente de EEUU, que le proporcionan más de tres mil millones de dólares en ayuda militar en tres años.

La guerra no sólo la pagan los contribuyentes de EEUU, sino también la gente de Colombia. De hecho, tienen diferentes impuestos especiales para pagar al ejército.

Gente de Colombia quiere impulsar la objeción fiscal al gasto militar en su país. Se han unido en la Conferencia Nacional de Objeción Fiscal de Colombia. Entre los objetivos que se han propuesto está el de hacer ver a la gente de su país el costo real de la guerra: el costo que producen las armas disparando y el costo social que supone dar todo este dinero al ejército en lugar de dedicarlo a necesidades sociales.

Quieren acometer un trabajo de investigación en dos fases que costarían un año de trabajo. Primero, quieren obtener los verdaderos números de la guerra y luego presentarlos a la sociedad de Colombia en una conferencia nacional.

Solicitan nuestra ayuda para ambas fases. En la primera les podemos ayudar a contactar con grupos e instituciones del Norte que trabajan en este campo (por ejemplo, SIPRI y World Watch Institute). Para la segunda, ellos quisieran contar con la presencia de gente representante de nuestros grupos en la propia Colombia cuando se presenten los resultados de la investigación. Esto sería en octubre o noviembre de 2005.

#### **Nuestra propuesta al Plenario de la Conferencia es:**

Aceptar nuestra participación en este trabajo de investigación ayudando a la Conferencia Nacional de Objeción Fiscal a los Gastos Militares de Colombia. Para la primera fase del trabajo se deberá nombrar entre nosotros un pequeño comité de coordinación. Para la segunda parte, tendremos que preparar la asistencia a la conferencia de presentación de los resultados de tres personas durante una semana en Colombia. Esto será, presumiblemente, en otoño de 2005.

La presencia en la Conferencia Nacional que organizará la Conferencia Nacional de Objeción Fiscal a los Gastos Militares de Colombia también será en representación de CPTI:

El costo presumible de este trabajo de apoyo es de 10.000 \$ USA (más o menos 8.500 €). Para este objetivo, las personas asistentes a la conferencia deben asumir que se hace imprescindible un trabajo especial de captación de fondos dado que el presupuesto de CPTI no permite afrontarlo. En este presupuesto se consideran los trabajos preliminares, incluyendo la posibilidad de contar con el apoyo de un economista que analice los resultados, y el viaje y estancia de tres personas durante una semana en Colombia para asistir a la conferencia de presentación de resultados.

*Tras un pequeño debate (todo el mundo estaba de acuerdo) la propuesta fue aceptada. El comité que va a coordinar junto con Ricardo este trabajo estará formado por Daniel Woodham (NWTRCC, EEUU), y Pedro Otaduy (COF, España y CPTI), presentes en el plenario y Derek Brett (Suiza, CPTI) que en ese momento no estaba allí pero que fue cooptado inmediatamente después. David Bassett (NCPTF, EEUU) y Dirk Panhuis (VRAK, Bélgica y CPTI) también formarán parte del comité. Daniel será el coordinador.*

\* \* \*

## 2.5

### International project

#### 2.5.1 CPTI

At the *Ninth International Conference* CPTI was chosen as the international project to be supported for its international work for COMT. Two donations were made: 75,00 € by readers of the Flemish *VRAK-INFO*, and 1.000,00 € by NWFS-Germany. Total: 1.075,00 €. CPTI is very grateful for this support.

#### 2.5.2 PROMUJER

Other projects submitted to the Ninth Conference were also valuable and recommended. One of these was PROMUJER, legal advice centre for women in San Marcos Nicaragua. It received support from the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee (Ithaca, NY) and National Campaign for Peace Tax Fund.

Brunhilde Stötzner reports:

„Promujer is a legal advice centre for women and other disadvantaged groups in situations of violence. The project was initiated by the association APRODIM in San Marcos (NGO) and is a partner organisation of *Eine Welt Haus* in Jena, Germany. It has its particular focus on socially weak strata and rural regions of the city. There people get the opportunity to get to know their rights and get them recognized. Because of financial hardship, most of them are not in a position to receive legal assistance by themselves. This is particularly true for violence within families.

During my sabbatical year (April 2003 to March 2004) I was working as volunteer in this project. This gave me an insight into their work, structures, contexts, successes and difficulties. The project takes care of cases of economic, physical and psychological violence, for instance maintenance proceedings, bodily harm, rape, sexual abuse, domestic violence, threats etc.

The staff of the project are two female promoters (seminars and home visits), a psychologist, a secretary and a lawyer. A network of volunteers that is being developed helps the victims of violence to have quick access to professional support.

The project started in 2000, financed by the foundation Nord-Südbrücken-Deutschland. After one year without any financial support Missionszentrale der Franziskaner in Bonn took care of financing. Since November 2003 Promujer receives financial support through World Day of Prayer of Women.

After my personal experience in the project I would like to express my gratitude to the US section for wishing to give support to the project in Nicaragua. The bank details are known in both organisations, but here they are once again: Banco de America Central , Nr. 0300855322

Managua BAC FLORIDA BANK 848.

More informations by Brunhilde Stötzner, Kirchgasse 50, 99439 Ramsla (bei Weimar), Germany. Ph./fax +49 36452 72261; e-mail: bruni.stoetzner@t-online.de

#### 2.5.3 New project 2004-2006

The conference accepted the proposal of Conscience Canada and Nos impôts pour la paix (Canada), and called upon participants and movements to fund this work, particularly the work of a part-time international coordinator.

#### “Canadian International Project”

By Dominique Boisvert

As our common international project, we have adopted this time the "Conscience Canada Proposal for an International Project" (from now on referred to as CANP). And Dominique Boisvert, vice-president of Conscience Canada, accepted to serve as the follow-up person for this international project.

To summarise briefly the CANP, it is **an attempt to generate wider public discussions about the concrete alternatives to war and traditional military defence**. Since our movements and members have been opposing war and violence in various ways sometimes for a long time, we thought time has come to go beyond saying "NO to war" and to start proposing concrete alternatives on how we could and want to do otherwise, starting in our own countries.

We are quite aware that it is a long term process. But we have found encouraging responses in some countries where such attempts have started developing, like in Canada and UK. Given the current violent international situation (especially in light of the so-called "war on terrorism"), more and more people and leaders (including some in the military) realise that the traditional military and violent approach is neither adequate nor successful. And that is why more and more people are interested in looking into alternative approaches.

**The CANP is simple, concrete and inexpensive.** It is a proposal that each individual country movement can adopt and *adapt* to its own reality (depending on its size, scope, means, membership, etc.). The idea is to initiate, within your movement and/or country, a reflection on how, concretely, within the next two years (until the next International Conference in 2006), you could --in your country--move a step forward in the good direction away from war and violence towards a more peaceful and non-violent way of country defense and international conflict resolution.

**The ways to do so are numerous and up to your own choice:** internal discussions within your movement, public "dialogues" of any sort and size to widen participation, lobby work with some civil servants (including with the military?), texts in various papers, research on this subject, discussions with other peace groups/movements/churches, etc<sup>1</sup>.

The nature, size and scope of the relevant activities are entirely up to you and have to fit within your own annual activities program. We do not want this CANP to burden your movements with an "additional" request, but rather propose it as a possibly interesting and useful project of your own programming. **With the added advantage and value that it would be linked to other similar efforts at the international level in other countries.**

We have experienced this "public dialogue" process here, in Canada, during the week of April 19 2004, to coincide with our Annual General Meeting. With extremely limited resources (in people, money and time), we were happily surprised to witness various public meetings (some larger, some more intimate) held in at least 15 different cities across our large country, reaching about 250 different persons in these discussions about alternatives. Reports from those meetings were then compiled and translated into a general Report on the Dialogues which is now available on our website ([www.consciencecanada.ca](http://www.consciencecanada.ca)). We would of course be happy to share with any of you all the experiences, tools and materials we have prepared for this first experience<sup>2</sup>. But you are entirely free to build your own project on a different basis or scale if you prefer. Provided it deals with the

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<sup>1</sup> Based on our Conscience Canada experience, here are some *short terms possibilities*:

- Choosing a week (to give all involved a sense of unity) during which time group discussions (public meeting or kitchen table sharings) on this issue could be organised.
- Finding local organisers who accept the responsibility of seeing to the organisation of such meetings.
- Appointing note-takers who accept to send in the report of these discussions to a national coordinator.

*Longer term objectives*, on a national level, may include:

- Gathering the notes taken at these meetings.
- Publishing overviews of these meetings to be distributed to participating national movements at their request.
- Publishing articles to be submitted to various newspapers and/or magazines.
- Writing a brief to be presented to national governments on this issue.

*Longer term objectives*, on an international level, include:

- Appointing an international coordinator.
- Compiling the overviews of the various national meetings.
- Writing a paper to be presented to the United Nations by the CPTI.

<sup>2</sup> The **guidelines prepared** by Conscience Canada (CC) for these dialogue meetings are available, upon request by email, from the international coordinator. Among other useful information culled from CC's cross-country dialogue experience, here are the four questions studied:

- What kind of defence/security strategy makes the most sense for Canada?
- What situations (e.g. national emergencies, aggression, peacekeeping) and what needs (e.g. food, energy, education, economy) should be taken into consideration when pondering non-violent defence strategies?
- What mandate should Canadian defence forces have, and how would they be trained/equipped?
- Can we identify some initial steps we could work towards, individually and organisationally?

concrete alternatives to war and violence within your own country, with a view to identifying a first concrete step that could be pursued in the next two years.

Such a CANP does not need much international money<sup>3</sup>, except to help with the leadership, coordination and follow-up aspects<sup>4</sup> till the next international Conference, which I accepted to do in Brussels on behalf of Conscience Canada. As you may recall, **the Brussels Conference decided to give precedence to building an international action together** rather than just sending money to support an outside valuable project.

Here are some implications and practical informations as regards *the international financial aspect* of the CANP:

- additional part time support work for CANP (beyond regular Conscience Canada work)
- additional material of a secretariat nature
- additional phone and computer bills
- postal costs for snail mail
- photocopies of material needed or requested

**ESTIMATED COSTS (for 2004-2006): 5,000 \$ CAN** (*the equivalent of 3 152 EUROS or 3 839.00 USD as of 15 September 2004*)

**The contributions from various participating countries/movements can be directed to:**

Conscience Canada, 901-70 Mill Street, Toronto, Ontario, CANADA, M5A 4R1 (*address of CC*)  
 Credit Union Account #: 04392-828-8018962311 (*our own bank account*)  
 Reason for payment: International Project (*if requested*)

*For people sending money in any currency that will be transferred in CANADIAN DOLLARS, you have to send it through:*

Credit Union Central of Ontario (SWIFT BIC Code: CUCXCATTONT)  
 Metro Credit Union (Transit & Bank Number: 04392-828)  
 Conscience Canada (Account Number: 8018962311)

*For people sending US DOLLARS, you can send it:*

- either by MAIL (in checks or postal money orders in US \$) to the Conscience Canada postal address (above) and we will be able to cash it in our bank account
- or by bank wires through:  
 Royal Bank of Canada (SWIFT BIC Code: ROYCCAT2XXX)  
 Credit Union Central of Ontario (Account: 000002-003-4000030)  
 Metro Credit Union (Transit and Bank Number: 04392-828)  
 Conscience Canada (Account Number: 8018962311)

Dominique Boisvert, Vice-president of Conscience Canada, coordinator for the CANP,  
[domfeldi@internet.uqam.ca](mailto:domfeldi@internet.uqam.ca)

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<sup>3</sup> National budgets could be needed to rent a hall/church basement/coffee house or the like for a public meeting; to communicate by phone, fax or regular mail with the local organisers; or to provide relevant background material on the related subjects to help groups organising such meetings. Each national movement would be responsible for the funding needed to cover these expenses (which in CC experience are minimal).

<sup>4</sup> The international coordinator's main task would be to keep in contact by email with the national movements (or their representative) which accept to organise these dialogue meetings. Each national organisation could have or share a dedicated secure webpage which they would be responsible to keep up to date. The necessary information would include: the dates and venues of the various national meetings, guidelines if useful, a question-answer section, the publication of overviews as well as the publication of briefs etc. The final task of the international coordinator could be to consolidate the overviews of the various national meetings in order to prepare a paper on this issue to be submitted to the United Nations by the CPTI.



## 2.6

**Next International WTR-PTC Conference**

By Dominique Boisvert (Canada)

Despite the fact that no country stood up spontaneously to volunteer to organize the next Conference (2006), we think that we came out of this Conference with a much more vigorous impetus and follow up procedures. Canada was clearly asked for organizing that next Conference, as Holland and Britain were also tested. But despite the fact that some countries already organized it with vary little financial and human resources (New Delhi in 1998 and Brussels in 1992 and this year are good examples), and that organizing the Conference may turn out to be a good "expanding/growing" mechanism for a national movement (as Berlin apparently was for Germany with the Berlin 2002 Conference), no country was ready to make a decision on the spot in Brussels. For this reason, but also because of the recent evolution of the WTR-PTC movement at the international level AND as a result of much "corridor work and informal discussions" during the Conference, the Conference has adopted, during its last plenary session, a certain number of follow up mechanisms which will, *de facto*, serve as an informal follow up structure until the next Conference: each "dossier" was taken up by a specific person who accepted to be the "contact person/leader/person in charge" (sometimes alone and sometimes with a specific committee whose members were also identified).

For the search of an organiser for the eleventh conference in 2006 the committee is composed of Dirk Panhuis (B, coordinator), Daniel Woodham (USA), Dominique Boisvert (Can) and Friedrich Heilmann (G).

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## 2.7

**Follow-up committees**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Co-ordinator</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Other people involved</b>
Next Conference	Dirk Panhuis panhuis@pi.be cpti@cpti.ws	C06	Daniel Woodham, Dominique Boisvert, Friedrich Heilmann
Colombian Project	Daniel Woodham danielwoodham@yahoo.com	CP	Ricardo Esquivia, Pedro Otaduy, Derek Brett, D. Bassett, D. Panhuis
Canadian Project	Dominique Boisvert domfeldi@internet.uqam.ca	CANP	
Communication between CPTI and National Movements	Derek Brett dubrett@talk21.com	COM	CPTI: M. Franz, D. Panhuis, H. Morgenstern, P. Otaduy, R. Esquivia, C. Goffi, C. Tomaselli
Court cases	Rosa Packard rpackard@optonline.net	COURT	
Listserv among movements	Gea Meijers gea@eurosvoorvrede.nl	LIST	
Arguments and counter-arguments	Marilyn Hébert hebert.hetu@sympatico.ca	ACA	

Each co-ordinator should have his/her "people involved" list.

People from outside (not "involved") can send their suggestions only to the co-ordinator. And this one will redistributed the suggestions to the other people "involved" in this task, and possibly others.

## 2.8

**Final statement**  
**Tenth International Conference on WTR and PTC**

We meet in a time of a globalisation of violence. For example the war in Iraq has led to a huge increase in military spending - probably never before have countries like the US and the UK spent so much on the military in so short a time, and they are dragging other countries associated with the war with them into this bottomless pit. The blind urge to go to war at any cost has put a severe strain on the whole international system. In Europe we see a rapid and dramatic slide towards militarization of the European Union. From India we are reminded of the nuclear sword of Damocles hanging over 1 billion people in India and Pakistan - and the rest of the world. People are attacked by horrible acts of terrorism, and millions all over the world live in fear. The cold war has been replaced by hot war in too many countries, social structures are breaking down, and millions upon millions are forced to live in abject poverty and hopelessness.

It is with deep concern that we see these developments. But we affirm that this is not a time to despair: perhaps never before has war tax resistance and peace tax campaigning been so needed!

We know what is impossible: to stop terrorism by using military firepower.

Among many other country reports, we heard from the US how a member of Congress changed his mind just a few days after September 11<sup>th</sup>, from "you better lie low now" to "keep talking, but explain it". We heard how all over that nation many people are actively opposing war, and slowly also making the link that it is being paid for by their taxes. From Ghana we heard how their country was the only one of all its neighbours where there was no fighting, and were reminded that when 2 parties fight, it is the children and women that get hurt most. From Colombia we heard how their country is being torn apart by violence and is being fully militarised by outsiders, and the horrible social consequences of this. But they don't have a problem with taxes for war - as not many people in Colombia have to pay taxes. Their problem is that the US taxpayers are paying for it!

No country is an island! The taxes paid in one nation now serve to militarise another. We reject this and resolve to globalise our spirit of co-operation and nonviolence. We reject the military approach to conflicts, and invite all people to let their conscience speak and join us in refusing to participate in and pay for war or any preparation for it in whatever form; to help get legal recognition of conscientious objection to military taxation; and to work together to implement a non-violent approach to conflicts.

Another world is possible! Our world has enough for everyone's needs ... let us stop wasting the money we desperately need to give human dignity to all on this planet!

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## 2.9

### **Evaluation**

During an evaluation session in the final plenary some comments were made. In general everyone agreed that this tenth conference had been excellent, both for its organization and for the high level of the speakers, the preparation of the workshops, and the discussions. Although not all discussions have led to concrete results, this conference probably had the highest standard of all ten conferences and perhaps we cannot expect the following conferences to reach the same level!

More specifically:

The conference center itself and its park are also very nice.

Participants also appreciated the attention for minorities from the South: they could speak about their situation and speak in their own language. This contributed to the fraternal feelings during the conference. Next time we should try to have attention also for indigenous people.

A frequent issue in conferences is the lack of time to know each other better. The short biographical notes given before the two previous conferences were very useful in this respect. Translators would appreciate receiving some text about our issues before the conference so that they can familiarize themselves with the topic, the vocabulary and frequently used acronyms.

Although the food was very good, the question was raised whether we could expect fair traded food at conferences.

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