

## Showing Up (cont. from page 1)

Showing up also made it possible to conduct a lunchtime panel on conscientious objection. Panelists were: Rachel Brett (Quaker Council on European Affairs), Michael Monod (International Fellowship of Reconciliation), Bart Horeman (War Resisters International), and Marian Franz on CPTI's work for the right of COMT.

Showing up got us involved in coffee shop chats. During one chat a representative from the High Commissioner's office invited me to speak up at a large seminar.

We are also "showing up" on people's computer screens. John Randall, who manages CPTI's website ([www.cpti.ws](http://www.cpti.ws)) reports that the number of visits to our web site is increasing, with people visiting from at least 60 countries. We are now averaging 106 visits per day; a recent maximum was 636. The average visitor is connected to our site for eight minutes.

When we show up and speak up, we find we have more allies than we imagined.

# ACTION ideas

### Place an NCPTF ad in your local paper

Don Irish got 65 fellow peace tax fund proponents to sign onto an ad in the *Twin Cities Pulse*. A sympathetic publisher gave Don 50% off the regular price for placing the quarter-page ad. Contact NCPTF for a copy of the ad, then contact your local paper to get it published!

### Going to a conference?

Take along one of our brand new display boards. Updated with current information about U.S. and world military spending, these displays are a good way to remind people how their taxes are currently used, and to propose an alternative. Contact us, and we can mail the display to you.

### Don't Hesitate, Nominate!

The NCPTF Nominating Committee welcomes names for next year's Board ballot. The Committee seeks people dedicated to the goals of the NCPTF, particularly those with experience in development and fundraising. The Committee will consider any name suggested. Formal nominations can be made by petition of five or more members. Please submit names and background information to the NCPTF, attn: Bill Galvin, Nominating Committee Chair.



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# Peace Tax Fund Update

National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund & The Peace Tax Foundation Issue 1, 2003

## The Importance of Showing Up: U.N. Commission Interested in Conscientious Objection

by Marian Franz

I was one of six delegates representing Conscience and Peace Tax International who "showed up" at the 59th conference of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland, in early April. Attending were one delegate each from Belgium and Switzerland, two from the Netherlands, and two from the U.S.

The UN Commission on Human Rights, comprised of 53 states, meets each year in Geneva for a six-week session in March/April. Over 3,000 delegates from member and observer states and from NGOs participated this year. Conscience and Peace Tax International (CPTI) also had an all-day board meeting.

The Commission is mandated to examine, monitor and report on human rights violations and to suggest remedial measures. Because no country wants to be accused of human rights violations, the system works largely by peer pressure: by exposing and shaming.

Because of its official UN consultative status, CPTI may attend the annual session and submit statements to the Commission. An NGO may also provide a brief oral statement to the Commission's plenary if time allows. This year's CPTI statement was given by Rosa Packard.

The Commission has long recognized the right to conscientious objection to military service (COMS). CPTI's aim is to extend that provision to include conscientious objection to military taxes (COMT). (Article 18 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights includes the "freedom of thought, conscience and religion.")

**Best Practices:** The Commission requested that the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) prepare a compilation and analysis of "best practices" regarding administration of COMS in various countries around the world. This best practices report will be a guideline or standard for other countries who are hesitant to provide legal recognition for COMS. This

report is especially timely because some countries are writing and rewriting their constitutions.

While in Geneva, we met with Lucie Viersma, the person responsible for compiling data on conscientious objection for the UNHCHR. She asked for our help. We agreed and asked if she would be willing to include COMT in her report. The answer: yes, she would be happy to do so.

So now, friends, we have work to do. Unfortunately, we have no example of a country which has passed Peace Tax legislation. We must collect examples such as: in the Netherlands in the 80's some local jurisdictions allowed the transfer of redirected tax money to a local peace fund; in Spain and Italy governments do not take action against people who redirect their taxes. Also, we need to document for the UN both those COMT cases which have gone to court in various countries and stories of property seizures and hardships.

*continued on page 5*

## Pesos for Peace

by Tim Godshall

"Not one man, not one woman, not one peso for war!" With these words, Yolanda Becerra concluded her presentation at the first-ever Colombian conference on conscientious objection to military taxes, held in Bogotá on February 10, 2003. Over one hundred people attended the conference, which featured panels on the costs of war, experiences of war tax resistance, and peace tax legislation.

The conference was planned to coincide with the visit of 16 U.S. Americans, including NCPTF board chair Steve Ratzlaff and me, who were participating in a learning tour sponsored by the Mennonite Central Committee. Our objective was to see directly how U.S. taxes are being used in Colombia.

*continued on page 3*

## Peace Tax Fund Activist Resources

\$ x # = amount

Peace Tax Fund Basic Brochure - new design just printed!.....	4 for \$1.00	_____
"Where Your Income Tax Money Really Goes" - pie chart.....	10 for \$1.00	_____
NCPTF Poster - Earth, Sun and Dove on blue background.....	\$4.00	_____
NCPTF Button - "Taxes for Peace Not War".....	\$1.00	_____
Funny Money - our very popular mini-flyer.....	10 for \$1.00	_____
Text of the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill.....	\$0.50	_____
"Basic Questions and Answers about the PTF Bill".....	5 for \$1.00	_____
"What would you do if your beliefs were declared illegal?"...5 for \$1.00	_____	_____
"Stages of Conscientious Objection to Military Taxation".....	5 for \$1.00	_____
"Conscientious Objector" - poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay....	5 for \$1.00	_____

← More resources on the reverse side

## H.R. 2037

On May 8, 2003, John Lewis introduced the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill in the House of Representatives with its new number, H.R. 2037, and the following co-sponsors:

- |                                   |                                       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Jim Leach                      | 16. Bobby Rush                        |
| 2. Eleanor Holmes Norton          | 17. Eddie Bernice Johnson <i>NEW!</i> |
| 3. James Oberstar                 | 18. Barbara Lee                       |
| 4. Sheila Jackson-Lee <i>NEW!</i> | 19. Peter DeFazio                     |
| 5. William Delahunt               | 20. Lynn Woolsey                      |
| 6. Jesse Jackson                  | 21. Sam Farr                          |
| 7. George Miller                  | 22. Darlene Hooley                    |
| 8. Barney Frank                   | 23. Joseph Hoeffel                    |
| 9. Edolphus Towns <i>NEW!</i>     | 24. Bernie Sanders                    |
| 10. Maurice Hinchley              | 25. Julia Carson                      |
| 11. Donald Payne                  | 26. William Clay                      |
| 12. Sherrod Brown                 | 27. Anna G. Eshoo                     |
| 13. Tammy Baldwin <i>NEW!</i>     | 28. James McGovern                    |
| 14. Major Owens                   | 29. Nick J. Rahall II <i>NEW!</i>     |
| 15. Ron Paul <i>NEW!</i>          |                                       |

A link to the updated list of cosponsors can be found at [www.peacetaxfund.org](http://www.peacetaxfund.org)

Issue 1, 2003

Peace Tax Fund Bill Introduced in 108th Congress! See back page for more info.

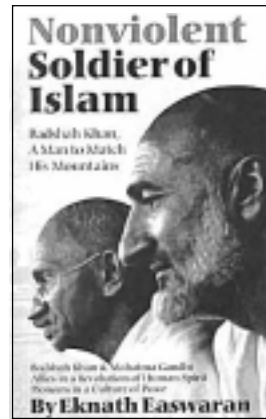


# Nonviolence is not for Sissies

by Marian Franz, NCPTF Executive Director

I'm going to give you some advice. Take it. You'll thank me. Read (or re-read) *Nonviolent Soldier of Islam: Badshah Khan, a Man to Match his Mountains* (by Eknath Easwaran, Nilgiri Press, 1999). In this time of after-shock and awe, here's an elemental education especially for westerners who tend to equate Islam with terrorism.

and many more wounded. As British troops moved in, Pathans came forward one after another to face the firing. When they fell, wounded, they were dragged back and others came forward and exposed themselves to the fire. The corpses became so numerous that ambulances could only take them away and burn them.



Khan was repeatedly imprisoned, ultimately spending over half of his long life in prison. After a time he heard about Gandhi and recognized in him a "great soul" who was attempting to serve God by serving the poorest of God's creation. Khan responded immediately to Gandhi's simple lifestyle and insistence upon truth and nonviolence in all of life's

affairs. With great mutual respect, these two shaped the tools of nonviolence in the struggle for India's independence from Britain.

Khan once asked Gandhi how it could be that the Pathans learned non-violence so quickly. Gandhi's immediate reply: "Nonviolence is not for cowards . . . the Pathans are more brave and courageous."

This story confronts us with searching questions about the depth of our own commitment and the contemplative means by which one reaches such a dignified and loving state. We all selectively read our scriptures. Nonviolence has a place in Christianity, Judaism, Islam, or whatever our 'ologies and 'isms. We humans are all made of the same stuff. If they have the capacity, so do we.

Nonviolence doesn't mean that no one gets killed. It embraces a readiness to surrender one's life rather than to erase another's. That's easy for us to say and to accept philosophically -- I admit that just having the correct ideas can make me feel smug and righteous. The challenge is to practice nonviolence when one is confronted with imminent threats and pain to one's self and one's family. To quote the title of Michael True's book, nonviolence is "an energy field more intense than war."

This story will make you stretch and grow. I suspect our spiritual muscles will become sore, but with daily exercise they'll get strong enough. One point is clear: Nonviolence is not for sissies.

Abdul Ghaffar Khan (1890-1988), a devout Muslim from the Pathan tribe, was born into wealth and privilege. His people had for centuries inhabited the rugged mountain terrain of the Khyber Pass, the British entryway into the Indian subcontinent. The early 20th century was a time of savage British oppression.

Pathans were known as a warrior people, demanding that no wrong go unavenged. In this context, Badshah Khan seemed an unlikely candidate to develop history's first professional nonviolent army. Yet Khan persuaded his fellow Pathans to lay down their guns and fight nonviolently. Incredibly, he raised an army of 100,000 unarmed "Servants of God" (Khudai Khidmatgar) who united in the cause of fighting the British with passive resistance and noncooperation. He turned his people, known for their fierceness, into the largest non-violent army this world has ever seen.

Why? How? Badshah Khan studied the Koran, fasted and prayed. He shared his insights, and called for subscribers to this oath: "I am a Servant of God; and as God needs no service, but serving his creation is serving him, I promise to serve humanity in the name of God. I promise to refrain from violence and from taking revenge. I promise to forgive those who oppress me or treat me with cruelty." Khan was up-front about the cost, calling for sacrifice, work and forgiveness. His "soldiers" armed themselves with faith, discipline and courage.

"There is nothing surprising in a Muslim or a Pathan like me subscribing to the creed of nonviolence," Khan insisted. "It is not a new creed. It was followed fourteen hundred years ago by the Prophet all the time he was in Mecca. ... Belief in God is to love one's fellow men."

The price these Servants of God paid to resist the violent British occupation was immense. Hundreds were killed

# Pesos for Peace (cont. from page 1)

The U.S. has given \$1.4 billion in the past three years to Colombia to fight the so-called war on drugs and, now, terror. We met people whose legal crops had been destroyed by U.S.-funded aerial fumigations meant to kill coca (the plant used to make cocaine). We met people who had family members killed, some by guerrillas, some by right-wing armed groups that collaborate with the U.S.-supported Colombian military.

In Colombia's 200 years of independence, it has had only five years free from war. The current violent conflict, which began during the 1950s, has intensified as U.S. involvement has increased. We heard a consistent message from the priests, pastors, scholars, farmers, labor organizers, politicians, and displaced people whom we met: The U.S. aid to Colombia is only making things worse.

At the conference, we heard from many Colombians who are not just waiting for the U.S. to change its policies. They are actively working through various means to oppose militarism and promote civil society in Colombia. Becerra is a member of an organization of women who refuse to bear children. Even though the Colombian Constitution guarantees freedom of conscience, forced military conscription is common in Colombia, and these women will not raise children just to see them go to war.

National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund & The Peace Tax Foundation



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This update is published three times a year and distributed to members of the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund. Annual membership costs \$35.

Since the Campaign advocates for the rights of conscience legislatively, gifts are not tax-deductible. Tax-deductible contributions can be made to the Peace Tax Foundation, which educates the public about issues of taxes and war.

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Refusal to pay war taxes, a relatively new idea in Colombia, was promoted by conference speakers and debated vigorously in small groups. In Colombia's 2003 budget, 15% is spent for the military, almost double what is spent for social programs (42% of the budget is spent on external debt). Though income taxes are paid only by those who are fairly wealthy, the federal government collects much of its revenue through sales taxes. Directly exchanging goods and services without using money was proposed as a way of not only resisting such taxes, but investing locally to counteract the negative effects of global trade.

In Colombia, those who work for human dignity and against violence do so at great personal risk. We met many people who live under death threats because of the truth they speak. The illegal armed groups often do their fundraising at gunpoint. To refuse payment could mean death or displacement. One thousand Colombians are forced to flee their homes every single day, adding to the population of displaced people that already exceeds 2 million.

The symptoms are certainly more obvious in a country as war-torn as Colombia, but they are a result of the same disease that afflicts the U.S.: militarism. The social, political, environmental and economic costs of militarism are high, but I was inspired by the determination and commitment of people dedicated to following their beliefs despite the dangers they face.

"The day that Colombia respects the rights of conscience, our society will have taken a great step forward," said keynote speaker Dr. Mario Garizabal. This conference was a definite step, albeit a small one, in that direction.

## New Staff Join NCPTF

Since our last newsletter, two new staff members have joined the NCPTF. Jacinta Nafziger is an intern from Eastern Mennonite University. Her internship started in January and runs through July. Tim Godshall came on board in March as administrative assistant. Jacinta and Tim have been hard at work designing and updating NCPTF outreach materials.

# News from the field

By Jennifer Beall

Often, when I speak to NCPTF members about the war in Iraq, they first express their dismay, then their hope that the war will have at least one small positive effect: to strengthen peace movements in general and the Peace Tax Fund in particular. In fact, I believe this has happened. One indication is the increase in the number of people contacting me to volunteer as CDCs (Congressional District Contacts).

Despite the figures that some media sources quote suggesting that a large percentage of Americans support the war in Iraq, there has been an unprecedented amount of visible protest against the war, both before it began and afterwards. Therefore, it is a great time to make people think about the fact that their taxes paid for the war, and to suggest they consider supporting Peace Tax Fund legislation.

This is where CDCs are vital. The NCPTF needs as many people as possible to spread the word about our legislation, which has never been more timely. Our current CDCs are doing a number of things to help the Campaign, both on a local and a national level, but they need your help!

Through some dedicated work by CDC Andy McKenna and others from Texas, Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX18), became an original cosponsor of HR 2037, her first time cosponsoring the bill. Andy also secured Peace Tax Fund endorsements from the Texas ACLU, the Texas Green Party and, later, the national Green Party!

Other CDCs have placed newspaper and magazine ads, have raised the Peace Tax Fund issue in local and regional peace groups, and have distributed Peace Tax Fund literature at peace vigils. Others have brought the issue before their yearly meetings or the regional conferences of their denominations. Some CDCs have arranged press conferences to generate media coverage. CDCs continue to write to their Congresspeople and to contact NCPTF members in their regions.

There are many ways to support the NCPTF. Please consider becoming a CDC or, at least, doing outreach activities that support the Campaign. To volunteer, or to get more information, contact Jennifer Beall at jenbeall@peacetaxfund.org or call (888) PEACETAX.

## Peace Tax Fund Activist Resources

\$ x # = amount

- "Congress Shall Make No Law..." - Stories of conscience.....\$1.00 \_\_\_\_\_
- "Compelled by Conscience" - NCPTF 15-minute video.....\$12.00 \_\_\_\_\_
- Questions that Refuse to Go Away - by Marian Franz.....\$5.00 \_\_\_\_\_
- Communities of Conscience - Collected statements on conscience and taxes for the military, 2nd edition.....\$12.00 \_\_\_\_\_
- War Tax Resistance: a guide to withholding your support from the military - 2003 edition, edited by Ruth Benn, Ed Hedemann...\$15.00 \_\_\_\_\_
- The Tax Dilemma: Praying for Peace, Paying for War - by Donald Kaufman.....\$5.00 \_\_\_\_\_
- A C.O.'s Guide to the U.N. Human Rights System - by Emily Miles.....\$15.00 \_\_\_\_\_
- Seeking Peace: Notes and Conversations Along the Way - by Johann Christoph Arnold with preface by Thich Nhat Hanh.....\$15.00 \_\_\_\_\_

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