

Creating a Peace Tax Fund

by Angela Orlando

Some people who feel very strongly opposed to war call themselves conscientious objectors. These are people who refuse to bear arms or participate in military service because of their religious or moral principles.

Some who feel very strongly opposed to war decide not to pay taxes since a large portion of taxes is spent on military purposes. This is against the law and people who do this can be prosecuted. They take a huge risk in order to abide by their moral beliefs. A group in the United States is trying to create an alternative. They want to establish something called a Peace Tax Fund. This fund would allow people who are morally opposed to war to be able to decide that their tax money should only be spent on non-military purposes. They would still have to pay their full taxes. The only difference is that they can make sure the government spends this money on life-affirming purposes. On May 25, 2005, HR 2631 - The Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill was introduced to the House of Representatives with 34 cosponsors. No action has been taken on this bill yet by the House.

What would you do
if someone came to your door
with a cup in hand
asking for a contribution
to help buy guns
to kill a group of people
they didn't like?

—Wally Nelson, African-American
civil rights and peace activist

To learn more about the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund go to <www.peacetaxfund.org>.

Angela Orlando is the coeditor of The Change Agent.

Did you know that Muhammad Ali was a conscientious objector?

In 1967, as the Vietnam War was escalating, Ali was called up for induction into the Armed Services. Ali refused induction on the grounds of religious beliefs. He was, in fact, a practicing Muslim minister. This refusal led to the now-famous Ali quote, "I ain't got no quarrel with them Vietcong..." He was stripped of his championship title, his passport taken; all his boxing licenses were canceled. He lost an initial court battle and was facing a 5-year prison term. He was the first national figure to speak out against the war in Vietnam. In 1971, the Supreme Court reversed his conviction and upheld his conscientious objector claim. Ali was free of the specter of jail, and free to travel to box anywhere in the world.

Excerpted from <www.ali.com>.

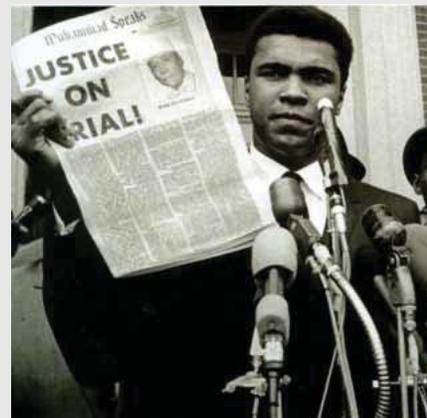


Image from <www.aavw.org>