



War Tax Protest & Resistance

A Liberatory Toolkit

by: k.a.h. (they/he)

PREFACE

Hello!

Thank you for finding your way to War Tax Protest & Resistance: A Liberatory Toolkit. If you're here, it is likely that, like me, you are wondering what forms of resistance are possible when we think beyond the (very necessary and important!) protesting, boycotting, engaging representatives, social media posting, self/community education, fundraising, etc. With genocide being directly funded by our tax dollars, I felt called to demystifying this area of organizing for myself and my community.

I have really appreciated stumbling upon the works of organizers like the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee and the War Resisters League who have largely informed this toolkit. With that in mind though, I recognize that there are so many folx in my communities that do not have the privilege to simply resist and divest away from structures of power as the consequences for those actions differ when we acknowledge oppression and the way white supremacy, anti-Blackness, colonialism, queer/transphobia, xenophobia, etc. makes resistance safe(r) for some and potentially life threatening for others. So, I made this toolkit with queer and Trans Black and brown folx who are distanced from generational wealth in mind.

I want to acknowledge that I am learning in real time as I make this toolkit, so my hope is that this gets you going on your own journey of a deeper dive into what resistance like this could mean for you. This is just the beginning of this learning and is a non-exhaustive list that supports us in becoming more informed and actionable. I am by no means a subject matter expert, I just know that my neurospicy brain benefits from having all the information I may need to learn something new in a structured and synthesized way made by and for my people. I hope this toolkit serves as a place of hope, strategy, community building, and solace in the midst of so much pain and grief.

Thank you for your curiosity, graciousness, and solidarity as we learn and navigate these systems that continue to attempt to erase and disappear us. Please know that continuing to post, contact reps, protest, boycotting, and education are still vital to our movements.

Deep breaths. Hug your beloveds. Another world is possible.

In Community,

k.a.h. (they/he)

CONTENTS

1

WHY PROTEST & RESIST?

2

HOW TO RESIST: INFORMATION FOR W-2
EMPLOYEES & SELF-EMPLOYED FOLX

3

FILING & NON-FILING: WHAT
ARE THE CONSEQUENCES?

4

ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF
TAX RESISTANCE

5

RESOURCES

1

WHY PROTEST & RESIST?

The collage features several protest signs and a central graphic. The signs include: '... you PROTEST POLICE BRUTALITY and know that the police get military equipment from the Department of Defense?', '... you want a WORLD WITHOUT BORDERS while your taxes are building walls?', '... you FIGHT MASS INCARCERATION while billions of tax dollars are spent every year on federal prisons?', '... you OPPOSE ENDLESS WAR: yet almost 50% of your federal income taxes are spent on the military?', 'NO JOBS NOT JAILS', 'BLACK LIVES MATTER', 'IS IT FROM', '1040', 'FEDERAL INCOME TAXES HUMAN NEEDS WAR', and 'REFUSE TO PAY'. The central graphic has the text 'What if' in large letters, with 'What' in black and 'if' in white. Below it, it says '... you decide not to wait for the government to do the right thing, but join with others in direct action and REFUSE TO PAY for this oppressive system!'. At the bottom, there are five columns of text: 'Step by step on how to refuse', 'List of consequences', 'Resistance experts', 'The history of war tax refusal', and 'Practices of resisters'. The contact information 'nwttrcc.org • nwttrccboycott.org 800-259-7464 • nwttrcc@nwttrcc.org' is at the bottom right.

CREDIT: NWTTRCC.ORG

The US Empire spends more money than any other nation state in the world on war every year.

When the term “war” is used here it includes the US military forces budget, sending billions of dollars in aid and weaponry to nation states like Israel, border militarization, federal prisons, police militarization, and has an enormous impact on the environment.

When we protest and resist war tax, we are taking an intersectional, abolitionist stance on liberation.

2

HOW TO RESIST: INFORMATION FOR W-2 EMPLOYEES & SELF-EMPLOYED FOLX

If you're like me, you probably wondered "is this even legal?"

The short answer is, it depends!

There are two common paths of resistance:

- Refuse to pay some or all of the income taxes you owe, and either file or not file a tax return. This is considered "civil disobedience" which makes this illegal. The consequences for this action differ depending on the routes you may choose to take in this method, which will be explained more in the coming pages!
- Earn less than a taxable income (\$12,500 for individuals/\$25,000 for married couples who file jointly). This is a "legal" method.

*** I want to express here that there is great risk in going the "civil disobedience" route. Something that has felt challenging as I have been learning from existing sources, is that there seems to be a lack of lived experience of navigating the criminal legal system in politicized bodies (aka Black and brown folx, Trans folx, folx with disabilities, immigrants and refugees, etc.). A lot of sources will tell you that the risk of incarceration or legal action taken against us is slim, but I encourage us to think more critically about WHO is telling us what our risks are, and with the information, queering our approach to resistance.*

In my learning, I have come to understand that we can take on different roles in this effort we can be in the spectrum of war tax resister or we can also explore the role of war tax protester. Both roles are impactful and have varying levels of safety within them.

*In the following pages I will share tools to consider and an invitation to alternatives to these approaches that center our safety while also creating the opportunity to resist/protest. ***

2

HOW TO RESIST: INFORMATION FOR W-2 EMPLOYEES & SELF-EMPLOYED FOLX

For folx who are W-4 employees, this means that your income is likely easier to track by the IRS. It is likely that your job withholds federal taxes from your paycheck. Here is a helpful strategy you can explore:

- File a new W-4 form – we can stop the withholding of income taxes that would be used for military spending by claiming additional deductions or exemption from withholding on our W-4 forms.
- **Please note:** these methods in this article can raise flags with the IRS and if you stay at your job for longer than a few years, there is a high likelihood that the IRS and your employer will catch on and mandate you to change your W-4 form. Some folx have reported that they were also fined for this.

For folx who are self-employed, there are a bit more creative ways you can explore withholding taxes and resistance:

- Here are some helpful strategies to do work that may not need to be reported.

3

FILING & NON-FILING: WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES?

So, the question of to file or not to file your tax returns may be alive for you. [Here](#) is a very helpful article that breaks this down.

- If you decide to file your return, here are some things to consider:
 - You can send a letter of protest in with your tax return or file a [Peace Tax Return](#).
 - If you file and then decide to not pay or only pay a portion of your return, know that this can make it easier for the IRS to send you to collections. There is a 10-year statute of limitations on collections (basically, these collections will be dropped in 10 years and expunged from your record if you decide to not pay them).
 - This approach of filing and then not paying can result in barriers to scholarships, healthcare subsidies, and future loans.
 - Filing and paying your return can also be a form of protest. How? You can pay for your return in small bills or coins, send a check with a message of protest on it, send a letter along with your check, and more.
 - An approach that many tax resisters/tax protesters take is only paying a portion of their return and redirecting the rest of what they would have paid back into their communities. For folk in oppressed identities, this could look like starting very small, leaving the larger risks to our more privileged allies who have the room to make these choices.
- If you decide to not file altogether, the penalties are more severe.
 - Even though this approach does make it harder for the IRS to send you to collections, there is no statute of limitations for collections if you are sent to collections (basically, this will stay on your record for life).
 - This can be considered “tax evasion” – which is essentially a willful choice to evade your taxes. There are legal implications for this that can result in incarceration, large fines, and more.
 - Please be very discerning if you decide to go this route, y’all. Do your research. Let’s keep each other safe.

4

ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF TAX RESISTANCE

Okay, now that we have the fundamentals down, what can we do as alternative forms of tax resistance to make sure we stay safe? What if we started small? As adrienne maree brown reminds us in Emergent Strategy, *“Small is good, small is all. (The large is a reflection of the small.)”*

Imagine this:

All of us who filed our taxes, withheld \$50 from what we owe back to the IRS and pooled that money together in our local communities. We could follow the wisdom of so many organizers who set up alternative funds to redirect resource back to our people. A revolutionary act of mutual aid.

This is one of many ideas we could come up with in community, the first step is to start dreaming and talking about it. Let’s gather together with our beloveds, our existing collectives we are a part of, align with grassroots organizers in community (specifically those who are fighting for Black folx, Indigenous folx, trans folx, immigrant/refugee folx, folx with disabilities, folx from Palestine, the Sudan, Congo, Haiti, etc.) and redirect some of these funds back to our people. This is an invitation to be in a practice of risk for the sake of love and liberation for all.

And to our cishet, white-bodied, generationally wealthy allies – please know that the system is made to protect you more often than not, so if you have the capacity to take a larger risk (like one listed on the previous pages), I celebrate you and have so much gratitude for your practice of love and freedom.

Another world is possible y’all, let’s build it together.

5

RESOURCES

Read:

- [What is War Tax Resistance?](#)
- [Books on Resistance](#)
- [Black Alliance for Peace: Demilitarize the US](#)

Watch:

- [Black Alliance for Peace YouTube Channel](#)
- [Death & Taxes](#)
- [War Tax Resistance 101 Webinar](#)

Follow:

- [@wartaxresister](#)
- [@ambreakai](#)

Listen:

- [Tax Chats Podcast](#)
- [Divest from the War Machine Summit](#)

