



Brenda Boughton retired teacher

"I'm a pacifist but I didn't start life as one. As you learn more about the world you realise it's the way to go. We have to learn to get on with other people. We have to learn that wars are not heroic, they are something to be ashamed of, a sign of weakness and failure."

Robin Brookes traditional toy designer

"A non-violent conflict resolution programme is urgently needed. If a fraction of the money spent on military preparations was spent on this we would go far along the road of making war a thing of the past."

Siân Cwper Buddhist

"The purpose of my Buddhist practice is to benefit all sentient beings. Killing and wounding people is the opposite, and I do not wish to pay for it. I want my taxes to go towards something beneficial."

Simon Heywood university lecturer

"If any UK government tries to spend a penny of my tax undermining international law, then as a citizen of the world I have the legal right to forbid this use of my money. And if any UK government tries to spend a penny of my tax destroying innocent lives, then as a human being I have the moral duty to exercise that right."

Joe Jenkins author/film-maker

"This government knows full well that even where the British give general consent to the process of taxation it is always a tentative consent, a fragile consent that must be nursed and safeguarded by positive public relations. Today there exists among taxpayers a reservoir of grievance and hurt that a British government has committed our armed forces into a misguided, mismanaged and illegal war. Increasingly it seems that there exists too, a potential of sympathy for war tax resisters."

Roy Prockter Chartered Management Accountant

"For all of my adult life I have held a strong conviction that all war, and all preparation for war, is wrong and contrary to the spirit of God, as experienced by many people of many different faiths and cultures, but most pertinently, as I have experienced it personally. I can no longer pay taxes for others to kill or prepare to kill in my name."

Dr Birgit Völlm psychiatrist & university lecturer

"I am a doctor and I chose this profession to help people and to alleviate suffering. Contributing to war directly or indirectly by giving money for it, is not compatible with my professional values as a health care professional."

Case history

Around 20 years ago there were three attempts by war tax resisters to get their cases heard in the European Court of Human Rights. They were arguing on the basis of Article 9 of the European Convention*. These cases were denied a hearing. The European Commission rebuffed their complaints as 'ill-founded', saying that taxes are 'general and neutral' and 'there has been no interference with the applicant's rights'. More recent case history refutes this reasoning.

In 2000 the Human Rights Act of 1998 came into force in Britain. Since 2004 we have been trying to get a judicial review in the High Court to contest our rights under the new Act.

In May 2005 Mr Justice Wilson allowed us a two hour appeal hearing rather than the usual 30 minutes.

In July 2005 in the High Court Mr Justice Collins found our arguments 'forceful' and our case 'interesting and important' but believed we must take the case to Strasbourg to challenge their decision of 20 years ago.

In October 2005 Lord Justice Sedley thought it 'arguable that (Strasbourg's) jurisprudence is not homogeneous and that the Art.9(1) door may at least be ajar'. He asked for our argument for judicial review to be heard 'from end to end' in the Court of Appeal

In March 2006 Lord Justices Mummery, Scott-Baker and Sir Mantell decided that Strasbourg 'have taken what may be thought to be a rather strict or narrow line on the manifestation of religious and philosophical belief' and that 'in some respects the reasoning may be legally and logically unsound'.

Thus we head towards Europe with express doubts cast over the decision of the European Commission by five senior British judges.

*Article 9 protects our right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Everyone has the right to manifest their religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.



**WE ARE ALL CONSCRIPTED
THROUGH OUR TAXES**

PEACE TAX SEVEN

We, seven British citizens, are making a complaint to the European Court of Human Rights on the grounds that our rights are violated by a tax system which makes us pay for the deliberate killing of other human beings. We regard this as a form of conscription, the same as military service and believe all tax paying citizens should have the right to conscientious objection to paying tax for the military.

We are asking to pay all of our taxes, but to have the military part placed in a ring-fenced fund solely for peaceful purposes such as health care, education and non-violent conflict resolution.

www.peacetaxseven.com

Your taxes pay for killing people

Many of us don't even think about it! We may in principle object to war and protest when other people are sent to fight them. For instance two million protested in London against the Iraq war and were ignored by the government. But war can only happen because the weapons and the training is paid for by us out of our taxes.

If you paid someone to go and kill an enemy, you would be as guilty of murder as the perpetrator. This is recognised in law and morally. Paying for the government's killing machine is no different.

We all bear a responsibility in our society and we should not be made to do something we believe is morally wrong. This is recognised in the Geneva Convention, the Nuremberg Principles and the European Convention on Human Rights.

PEACE TAX SEVEN

We are a group of seven taxpaying citizens who want to make a positive contribution to society by paying our tax in full. We object in conscience to paying others to kill on our behalf, but current tax policy forces us to do just that.

We have each tried to direct our income taxes to be used for peaceful and non-military purposes. In each case we were denied the right, and each of us has faced a dilemma: either to pay our taxes and so become complicit in killing; or to follow our conscience and break the law by withholding payment of a portion of our taxes.

Following our consciences has lead us to court or the threat of prosecution. We object in conscience to this financial conscription, and believe that its legal basis is questionable. We are seeking a change of current UK tax policy to allow any citizen who conscientiously objects to paying for preparations for war to divert that part of their taxes to a ring fenced Peace Fund to pay for life affirming activities such as health care, education and non-violent conflict resolution.

The legal argument

The right of conscientious objection to conscription to military service has been recognised in most democracies and was recognised during both World Wars in Britain. The right not to pay taxes for military

purposes is a logical extension of the right to refuse to take part in active military service.

Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) recognises freedom of thought, conscience and religion. The ECHR is part of UK law under the terms of the Human Rights Act 1998, which came into force in October 2000. Since that date it has been unlawful for a public authority to act in a way which is incompatible with the ECHR.

Compelling conscientious objectors to contribute to military expenditure constitutes a disproportionate interference with these basic human rights, and is therefore unlawful - because we should not be forced to do something we believe is so fundamentally, morally wrong.

We have tried to get our case heard in the British courts but have been referred to the European Court of Human Rights because we must overturn their decision not to hear similar cases 20 years ago. (See our case history on the back page). If we win, the British government would be under obligation to consider the incompatibility between UK tax law and human rights law.

Our affiliation with Conscience

"We are all members of Conscience THE PEACE TAX CAMPAIGN (www.conscienceonline.org.uk) which campaigns and lobbies for the legal right for those with a conscientious objection to war to have the military part of their taxes spent on peacebuilding initiatives. With support from Conscience, the Peace Tax Seven are taking the legal argument forward through the courts."

We are connected with many organisations with similar aims from across Europe and the rest of the world.

Please help us

The case is likely to take up to 3 years to get to the European Court and may entail costs of up to £70,000. We are personally liable for these costs. Please give your financial support and help us to spread this information. Use the form opposite to send a cheque payable to PEACE TAX SEVEN.

Regular contributions would be most useful, please consider filling in the standing order form.

Alternatively pay online at www.peacetaxseven.com

I would like to help PEACE TAX SEVEN win my right not to pay for war preparations

Name

Address

postcode

Email

I enclose a donation of £

I would like DVD and VHS copies of *Contempt of Conscience*, a 12 minute film about the campaign, at £6.50 (inc. p&p) each

I would like a receipt

I would like copies of this leaflet

Please send me more information about your campaign as it becomes available

Please reimburse me should all the funds raised not be required. (We will donate any surplus to Conscience. If you would like to request a proportional refund of your donation, please tick this box and provide your address above.)

Standing order

Name of bank

Address of bank

postcode

account no. sort code

pay £10 £5 £3 other £

monthly until further notice, starting on

to PEACE TAX SEVEN

account no. 31357190 sort code 40-19-16
HSBC, 45 Market Place, Devizes, Wilts SN10 1HZ

signature date

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