

Update

Broome County
New York



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Apocalypse Now?

On September 21, author Derrick Jensen addressed a packed lecture hall on the Binghamton University campus, painting a grim picture of what lies ahead for a civilization that continues to exploit finite resources. He said he has been asked to describe a sustainable culture. There is only one: the Stone Age which is exemplified by the native communities of North America. As an example, he said Indian communities in the Pacific Northwest lived along rivers, rich in salmon, for over 12,000 years without degrading the environment. Now those same rivers have hardly any salmon at all due to habitat destruction and dam building. He used salmon throughout his talk as examples of what to do and what not to do. When we remove a salmon from a river, we should make sure that the conditions that produced the salmon are maintained so that other salmon will return next year.

If, when a logger views a tree, he sees only dollar signs, this will influence how he treats the tree. If, on the other, hand he sees an entire forest and individual trees and strives to keep the forest as a viable habitat, not only for the trees, but for the creatures that live in the forest, he will behave very differently.

Jensen states, as a fact, that in the future there will be far fewer humans on earth. When this collapse comes, many will die. Some of those that survive will be the rural poor such as subsistence farmers in India and Africa. They know how to exist on what they produce. Those that will not survive will be the urban rich and the urban poor. That is, they will not survive unless they learn what native plants can be used for food and medicine.

He sees the main problem being the growth of cities. As cities increased in size, they could not feed and care for the residents

based on the resources within the city. They had to move outward to obtain the needed resources. This meant seizing the land of the rural residents by whatever means such as how the first immigrants to North America took over the land from the natives killing them if need be.

Jensen said, over and over, that every cell of his body hopes that our society will understand what is happening and take the moves to head off its own collapse. However, it was obvious that he did not believe that this would happen.

He also spoke at length about violence. He said violence from those in power directed downwards against those not in power is condoned whereas in the other direction it is dealt with severely. His views on upward-directed violence produced a healthy discussion on peacenet. [To join peacenet, send a message with one line, "subscribe peacenet" to listserv@listserv.binghamton.edu.]

BCPA Meeting on Tax Resistance

[David Schenck has been resisting and redirecting war taxes for about 20 years. He is currently employed full time at Steuben County in Bath, NY and works there as a clinical social worker. He lives with his wife Winnie Romeril (a peace educator and paramedic) in the small community of Prattsburgh in a cabin in the woods, about 12 miles to the northwest of Bath. In addition to war tax resistance, his other passion includes bicycling of all types and he is a year-round bicycle commuter. Major influences in his life have been Mahatma Gandhi, Henry David Thoreau, Dorothy Day, and Thomas Merton.]

On September 9, 2008, David Schenck traveled addressed Broome County Peace Action after our September Board Meeting. About 30 people were in attendance.

David has been a war-tax resister since his student days in St. Louis. He told us that war tax resistance is a powerful antidote for feeling powerless. Sometimes peace activists wonder if their message is ever getting through. When you withhold some or all of your taxes and attach a letter explaining your reasons, you KNOW that someone is reading it.

David Schenck has attended the National War-Tax Resister conference. He says that being with other resisters, gives one a great sense of community.

He remembers, as a young boy, asking his mother why we go to war to kill people when we are taught not to kill. Henry David Thoreau, one of the first and most publicized war-tax resisters, went to jail rather than pay a Massachusetts poll tax that generated funds for the Mexican-American war.

War tax resistance usually involves resistance to the income tax. For many of us this, money is taken from our pay and we only have indirect control over it. David is a W-2 resister. He claims extra

deductions in order to have less withheld. Some people don't file at all. He says the amount is not important, the act is important.

David broke us into groups to consider the questions:

1. What inspires you about war-tax resistance?
2. What makes you most uncomfortable about war-tax resistance?

Some of the statements concerning what inspires us about tax resistance:

1. Money talks and it is a way to give a message to the government.
2. If enough did it, it would make a difference.
3. Gives a sense of empowerment.
4. By using our wealth to fund war, we are guilty.
5. Gives us solidarity with troops who don't deploy.
6. Gets attention. Alexander Haig said, "Let them march all they want as long as they pay their taxes."
7. Builds community.

And on what makes us uncomfortable:

1. Possibility of arrest, fines, and jail time.
2. Not sure how to get a hold of the money in order to resist. Control.
3. IRS might get more from you in the long run after fines and interest are added.
4. Stigma of being a lawbreaker.
5. A sense of responsibility to family. Am I putting my family at risk financially?
6. Fear of being put on an enemies list.
7. May lead to an audit

On some of the issues in the second part, David said that studies have shown that tax-resisters do not have an increased risk of audit compared to other filers. One of David's purposes in his talk was to help extinguish our fear of the IRS. Of the thousands of resisters over the year, only about 10 have ever served time in jail. The fear that the IRS might, in the long run, get even more money from us is not valid. It may take the IRS a lot of money to collect.

When he first did war-tax-resistance, he redirected 50% of his tax. He felt a real sense of empowerment when he dropped his 1040 form in the mailbox. If one does this, in the attached letter, one should

emphasize that this is being done as a question of conscience. The money David holds back, he gives to a charity. His personal favorite is Catholic Charities.

The IRS has placed a lien on his house but this is only of importance when it comes time to sell.

He is very public about this. When he does not pay, he sends a letter-to-the-editor which is usually published. There are over 1000 people participating in the 2008 War Tax Boycott. All the names are listed at www.wartaxboycott.org.

Before becoming a war-tax-resister, one should do some study. He recommends: *War Tax Resistance: A Guide to Withholding Your Support* which is available from the website: www.nwtrcc.org (National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee).

There are a number of funds set up to receive diverted funds. The above web site has links to some.

David will conduct a workshop at the **Conference on Social Justice**. See items on this page for information about the Conference.

Broome County Peace Action Board meetings

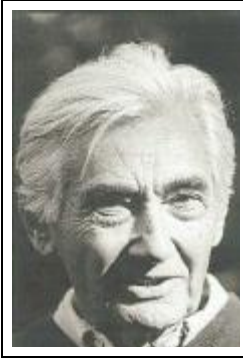
The Board meets the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 P.M. at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation on Riverside Drive in Binghamton. Each meeting from October through May is followed by a speaker on a topic of interest to the peace community. Occasionally plans change (weather, illness, scheduling conflicts) so you may want to call President Tarik Abdelazim at 221-0893 or e-mail him at modocpress@yahoo.com. The talks start about 8:15. Talks are listed on our Web site: bcpeaceaction.org

Upcoming speakers:

Calendar

Every Monday at 4:30 - 5:30: Peace Vigil
in front of Federal Building, Henry Street,
Binghamton

**Nov. 7-9: SUNY Social Justice
Conference, Binghamton University.**



HOWARD ZINN

War and Social Justice
A People's History

Saturday, Nov. 8
7:00 PM in the Anderson Center,
Binghamton, University

“There is no flag large enough to cover the shame of
killing innocent people” — Howard Zinn

Howard Zinn, author of the best-selling classic “A People’s History of the United States” will be delivering the keynote address at the SUNY Social Justice Conference, a weekend of workshops, networking, and strategy to build a new movement for real social change.

Sponsored by the Harper College Dean’s Office, Office of the Provost, EMO/SAC, Binghamton Political Initiative, College of Community & Public Affairs, Institute for Global Studies, Department of Human Development, Women’s Studies, Sociology Department, History Department, Political Science Department, Anthropology Department, English Department, & the PIC Program.

SUNY Social Justice Conference
November 7 - 9 at SUNY Binghamton
For a list of the workshops, go to:
www.sunysocialjustice.org

CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE

A large group of enthusiastic students at Binghamton University are planning a **Conference on Social Justice** at the university the weekend of November 7th. See above. The event is open to the public and a number of community organizations, including **Broome County Peace Action**, will be conducting workshops. They will be conducted Saturday morning and afternoon, and Sunday morning. The two sponsored by BCPA will be on **war tax resistance** and **non-violent civil disobedience**. Registration, on a sliding scale of \$5-20, starts at 9:00 AM Saturday morning in the lobby of the Fine Arts Building. The keynote speaker Saturday night will be **Howard Zinn**, who will talk on, “War and Social Justice.” He will speak at the Anderson center at 7 PM, with admission free and open to the public. At that time, a program will be distributed to an audience that is expected to fill the 1200-seat facility. To show support and to help with the funding for the conference, advertisements are being solicited for this program. On one page will be a list of individuals who believe that student activity for social justice is not only important but perhaps essential for our country to change course. Broome County Peace Action has taken on the responsibility of recruiting names for this list. The list will be preceded by the statement: **“We strongly support this conference and similar activities which stimulate student involvement in social justice issues.”** The cost is just \$10 per listing — not much, but if many consent it could come to a sizable amount. Please consider having your name(s) included by completing the form below.

Name(s) as you would like it listed _____ Tel. # or E-mail* _____

Amount enclosed: _____

*For verification purposes only

Please make your check out to BCPA and write Program Ad on the memo line. Mail with this form by October 24th at the latest to: Broome County Peace Action, PO Box 1611, Binghamton, NY 13902

**What Does Code Mean
On Your Mailing Label?**

Take a look at the letter code on your mailing label. It tells if you have a paid-up membership in Peace Action or if you need to contribute to stay on the mailing list. The different codes are:

08: You have already paid your membership in 2008. THANK YOU!

07, 06, 05: Your last paid membership was in 2007, 2006, 2005, etc. Please renew using the form on Page 3.

F: You were added in 2004.

G: You were added in 2005.

H: You were added in 2006.

I: You were added in 2007.

J: You were added in 2008.

If you would like to continue receiving **UPDATE** but feel you cannot make a membership payment at this time, just give us a call (729-1044) and we will keep your name on the mailing list.

UPDATE

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www.tier.net/users/peaceaction

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