



(Graphic by Jesse Graber)

*Adapted from H.A. Penner's*  
Mennonite Church USA Equipping Seminar  
MennoCon23, Kansas City, Missouri  
July 6, 2023

# MC USA Church Peace Tax Fund

The Church Peace Tax Fund was renewed in 2019 as a way to resist the payment of federal taxes that underwrite killing, war and militarism.

Churchwide inspiration and support of those who conscientiously object to the payment of war taxes while underwriting opportunities for active peacemaking was affirmed.

The fund is rooted in the biblical commandment not to kill (Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17), in Jesus' teachings to love God, your neighbor (Matthew 22:37-39) and the enemy (Matthew 5:44), as well as in the historic statements of our churches.



**Mennonite  
Church  
USA**

**WAR,  
WE'RE NOT  
BUYING IT!**

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**WE'LL  
PAY FOR  
PEACE!**

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Image by Jesse Graber

# Conscience Against War

Mennonite Church USA supports, enables and equips those who, because of conscience, are unable to pay taxes that underwrite war and militarism.

While withholding war taxes for moral reasons is currently illegal, the U.S. Constitution outlines this right as one of religious freedom.



Photo Credit: Conscience

# Ways to Resist Taxes for War



Photo by Conscience



Write letters to newspapers



Speak to elected officials



Live with less taxable income



Decline to pay a symbolic amount of tax



Redirect the portion of taxes that support militarism to the MC USA Church Peace Tax Fund

# What we said:

“ . . . in cases where members have a conscience against paying the portion of their income tax used for military purposes, and where they are now able to resist the collection of that part of their taxes, we encourage our congregations to be supportive by:

- a) Studying the pertinent biblical texts and praying together.
- b) Negotiating financial assistance to those required to pay penalties.
- c) Participating with the resisters in the opportunity to witness to the authorities...”

– *Resolution on Military Tax Withholding, Mennonite Church General Assembly, Normal, Illinois, Aug. 1-4, 1989.*

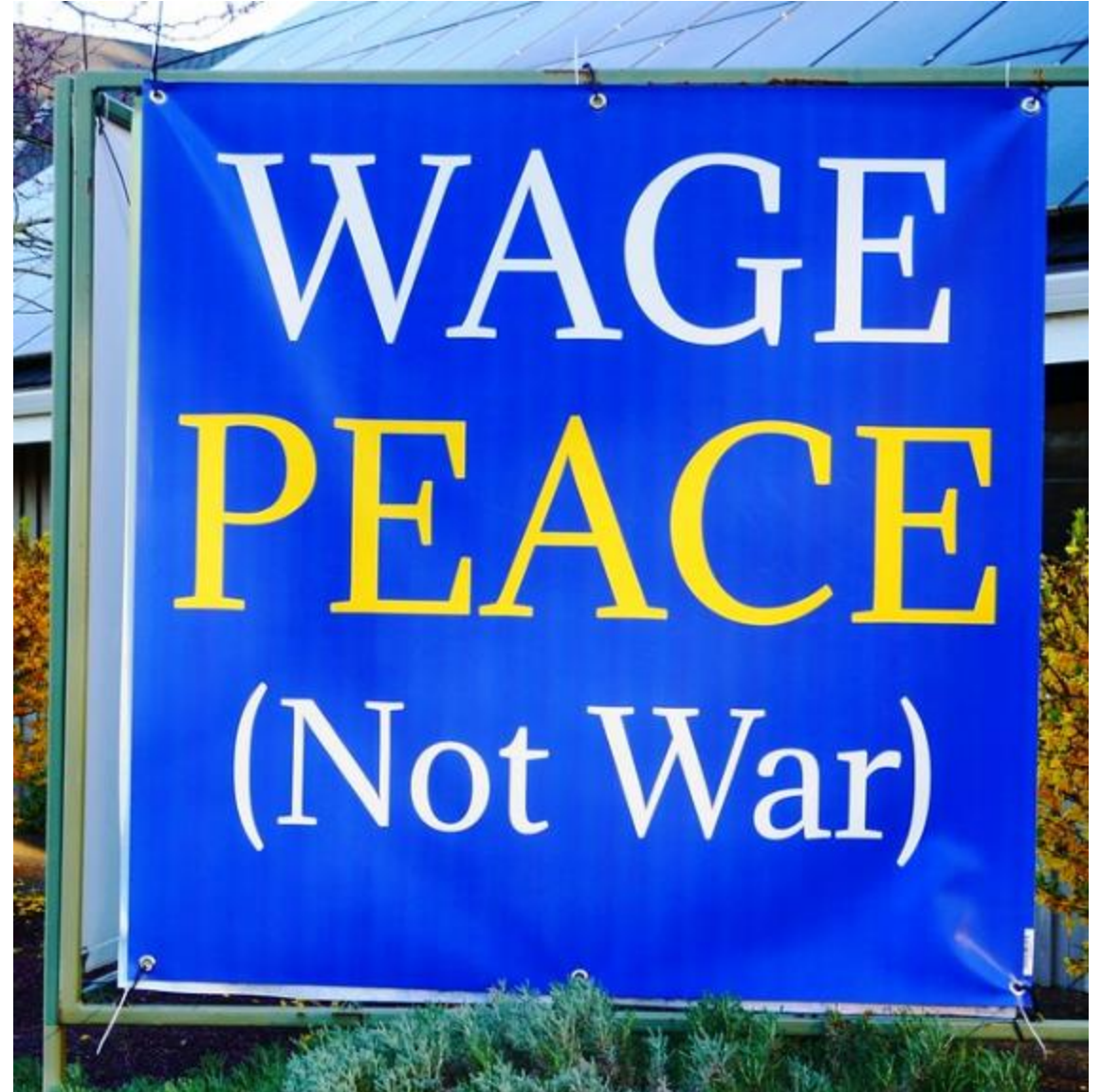


Photo Credit: Rick Obst

# What we said:

***"We remain committed as a church to the belief that participation in war is contrary to the will of God. . . Therefore, the Delegate Assembly of Mennonite Church USA calls affiliated congregations to a renewed emphasis on trusting God and the way of Jesus, not violence, for our security."***

—“Faithful Witness Amid Endless War” resolution passed by the Mennonite Church USA Delegate Assembly in Kansas City, Missouri on July 1, 2015.



# A legacy of witness

- The U.S. Mennonite Church in cooperation with other North American Historic Peace Churches compelled the U.S. government to make provisions allowing “conscientious objectors” during World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War.
- Allowances were made to serve initially in Civilian Public Service (CPS) and later in Voluntary Service, Pax, 1-W, Teachers Abroad Programs (TAP) and other church-related alternative service programs.



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# Orie Miller

Shortly after a military draft became law in 1940, Mennonite Central Committee pioneer, Orie Miller, who became an overseer of the Civilian Public Service camps, *said:*

*“If the government would not allow the 'boys' to follow their consciences, it would be 'satisfactory' to the folks back home to see the 'boys' go to jail.”*

He added that *“[the folks back home] would pay their share of maintaining a program allowing their 'boys' to stay out of the military, even if that meant that every Mennonite farm would have to be mortgaged.”*

(Source: The Earth is the Lord's by John L. Ruth, Herald Press 2001 pp. 975-6)

# Bearing the Cost

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During World War II, the Historic Peace Churches bore the cost of maintaining Civilian Public Service (CPS) camps. “In 1941, \$318 of the total of \$1,163 (27%) received in the year’s offerings at the Ephrata, Pennsylvania, Mennonite Church was earmarked to support the CPS camps.

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For six years, 1941-1947, CPS factored largely in the life of that congregation.

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Not as obvious at first was the fact that their families had no one earning wages. Thus, in addition to the fund directly earmarked for CPS, additional money was provided for CPS dependents.”

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Source: Bringing in the Sheaves by Karen Groff Beyer, Ephrata Mennonite Church, 2009, pp. 61-62)

Mennonite Community Photographs, 1947-1953. The Congregation. (HM4-134 Box 1 photo 010.0-10)  
Mennonite Church USA Archives, Goshen, Indiana.



# A legacy of witness



Donations to Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Central Committee have underwritten most of the costs of subsequent voluntary service, Pax, the Teachers Abroad Program and other church-related alternative service programs.



# SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM REGISTRATION FORM

PRINT ONLY IN BLACK INK AND IN CAPITAL LETTERS ONLY

DATE OF BIRTH: (MM-DD-YYYY)

1   -   -

SEX: (Mark with "X")

2

Male Female

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER:

3    -   -

LAST NAME:

4

FIRST NAME & MIDDLE NAME

CURRENT MAILING ADDRESS: (STREET ADDRESS & APARTMENT NUMBER)

5

CITY:

ELECTRONIC MAILING ADDRESS: (EMAIL ADDRESS)

6

PHONE NUMBER:

7    -    -

TODAY'S DATE: (MM-DD-YYYY)

8   -   -

AGENCY USE

I AFFIRM THE FOREGOING STATEMENTS

9

SIGNATURE

We estimate the public reporting burden for this collection will vary from two minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering data, reviewing the information, Send comments regarding the burden statement or any other aspects of the collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to: Selective Service System, Arlington, VA 22209-2425. The OMB control number 3240-0002, is currently valid. Persons are not required to respond to this collection unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

# Student Aid Fund for Non-Registrants

Mennonite Church USA established the Student Aid Fund for Nonregistrants to support students who have refused on the basis of conscience to register with U.S. Selective Service.

# Is paying for war the same as participation in war?

**Form 1040** Department of the Treasury—Internal Revenue Service (99) **2021** U.S. Individual Income Tax Return OMB No. 1545-0074 IRS Use Only—Do not write or staple in this space.

**Filing Status**  Single  Married filing jointly  Married filing separately (MFS)  Head of household (HOH)  Qualifying widow(er) (QW)  
 Check only one box. If you checked the MFS box, enter the name of your spouse. If you checked the HOH or QW box, enter the child's name if the qualifying person is a child but not your dependent ▶

Your first name and middle initial Last name Your social security number  
 If joint return, spouse's first name and middle initial Last name Spouse's social security number

Home address (number and street). If you have a P.O. box, see instructions. Apt. no.  
 City, town, or post office. If you have a foreign address, also complete spaces below. State ZIP code  
 Foreign country name Foreign province/state/county Foreign postal code  
**Presidential Election Campaign** Check here if you, or your spouse if filing jointly, want \$3 to go to this fund. Checking a box below will not change your tax or refund.  
 You  Spouse

At any time during 2021, did you receive, sell, exchange, or otherwise dispose of any financial interest in any virtual currency?  Yes  No

**Standard Deduction** **Someone can claim:**  You as a dependent  Your spouse as a dependent  
 Spouse itemizes on a separate return or you were a dual-status alien

**Age/Blindness** **You:**  Were born before January 2, 1957  Are blind **Spouse:**  Was born before January 2, 1957  Is blind

**Dependents** (see instructions):  
 If more than four dependents, see instructions and check here ▶

(1) First name	Last name	(2) Social security number	(3) Relationship to you	(4) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> if qualifies for (see instructions): Child tax credit	Credit for other dependents
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1</b> Wages, salaries, tips, etc. Attach Form(s) W-2 . . . . .		<b>1</b>	
<b>2a</b> Tax-exempt interest . . . . .	<b>2a</b>	<b>2b</b> Taxable interest . . . . .	<b>2b</b>
<b>3a</b> Qualified dividends . . . . .	<b>3a</b>	<b>b</b> Ordinary dividends . . . . .	<b>3b</b>
<b>4a</b> IRA distributions . . . . .	<b>4a</b>	<b>b</b> Taxable amount . . . . .	<b>4b</b>
<b>5a</b> Pensions and annuities . . . . .	<b>5a</b>	<b>b</b> Taxable amount . . . . .	<b>5b</b>
<b>6a</b> Social security benefits . . . . .	<b>6a</b>	<b>b</b> Taxable amount . . . . .	<b>6b</b>
<b>7</b> Capital gain or (loss). Attach Schedule D if required. If not required, check here . . . . .			<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> Other income from Schedule 1, line 10 . . . . .			<b>8</b>
<b>9</b> Add lines 1, 2b, 3b, 4b, 5b, 6b, 7, and 8. This is your <b>total income</b> . . . . .			<b>9</b>
<b>10</b> Adjustments to income from Schedule 1, line 26 . . . . .			<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> Subtract line 10 from line 9. This is your <b>adjusted gross income</b> . . . . .			<b>11</b>
<b>12a</b> <b>Standard deduction or itemized deductions</b> (from Schedule A) . . . . .	<b>12a</b>		
<b>b</b> Charitable contributions if you take the standard deduction (see instructions)	<b>12b</b>		
<b>c</b> Add lines 12a and 12b . . . . .		<b>12c</b>	
<b>13</b> Qualified business income deduction from Form 8995 or Form 8995-A . . . . .		<b>13</b>	
<b>14</b> Add lines 12c and 13 . . . . .		<b>14</b>	
<b>15</b> <b>Taxable income.</b> Subtract line 14 from line 11. If zero or less, enter -0- . . . . .		<b>15</b>	

**Standard Deduction for—**  
 • Single or Married filing separately, \$12,550  
 • Married filing jointly or Qualifying widow(er), \$25,100  
 • Head of household, \$18,800  
 • If you checked any box under **Standard Deduction**, see instructions.

Attach Sch. B if required.

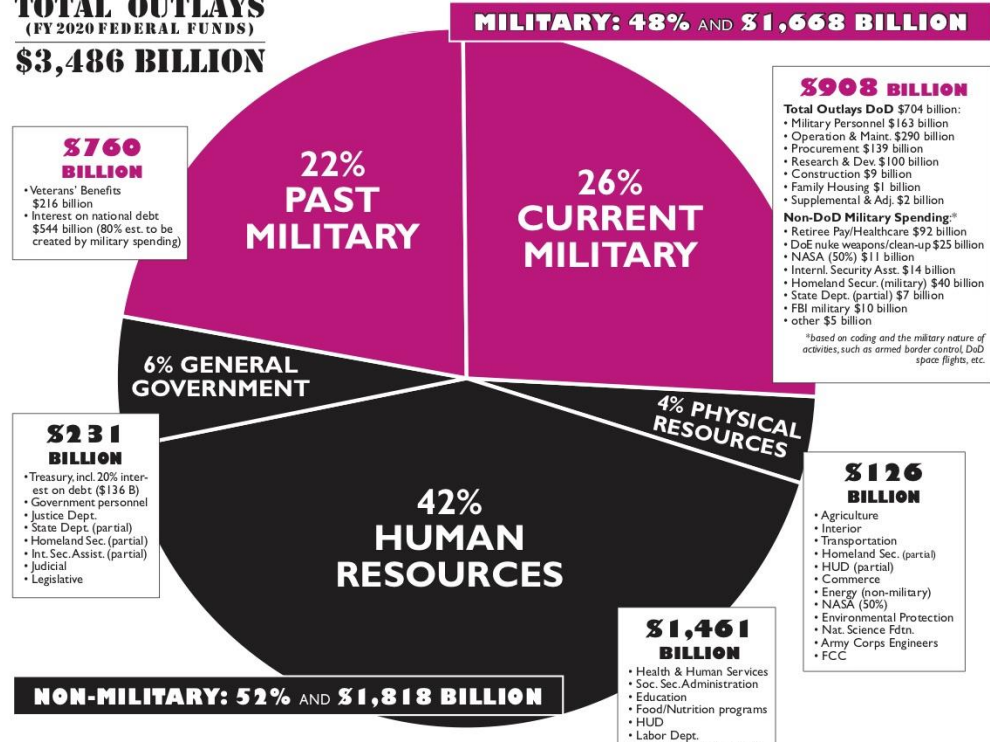
An anonymous 18-year-old once said,  
“If I pay a person to kill another, I am a criminal.  
But when I pay many people to kill many others,  
I am a taxpayer!” Don't taxpayers have the right NOT to kill?



# WHERE YOUR INCOME TAX MONEY REALLY GOES

U.S. FEDERAL BUDGET 2020 FISCAL YEAR

**TOTAL OUTLAYS**  
(FY 2020 FEDERAL FUNDS)  
**\$3,486 BILLION**



**\$760 BILLION**

- Veterans' Benefits \$216 billion
- Interest on national debt \$544 billion (80% est. to be created by military spending)

**\$908 BILLION**

**Total Outlays DoD \$704 billion:**

- Military Personnel \$163 billion
- Operation & Maint. \$290 billion
- Procurement \$139 billion
- Research & Dev. \$100 billion
- Construction \$9 billion
- Family Housing \$1 billion
- Supplemental & Adj. \$2 billion

**Non-DoD Military Spending:**

- Retiree Pay/Healthcare \$92 billion
- DoE nuke weapons/clean-up \$25 billion
- NASA (50%) \$11 billion
- Internal Security Ass. \$14 billion
- Homeland Secur. (military) \$40 billion
- State Dept. (partial) \$7 billion
- FBI military \$10 billion
- other \$5 billion

\*based on coding and the military nature of activities, such as armed border control, DoD space flights, etc.

**\$231 BILLION**

- Treasury, incl. 20% interest on debt (\$136 B)
- Government personnel
- Justice Dept.
- State Dept. (partial)
- Homeland Sec. (partial)
- Int. Sec. Assist. (partial)
- Judicial
- Legislative

**\$126 BILLION**

- Agriculture
- Interior
- Transportation
- Homeland Sec. (partial)
- HUD (partial)
- Commerce
- Energy (non-military)
- NASA (50%)
- Environmental Protection
- Nat. Science Fdn.
- Army Corps Engineers
- FCC

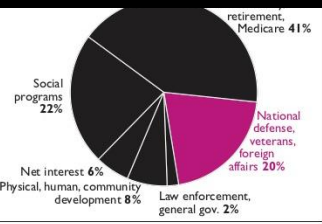
**\$1,461 BILLION**

- Health & Human Services
- Soc. Sec. Administration
- Education
- Food/Nutrition programs
- HUD
- Labor Dept.

## A war machine draft on our finances

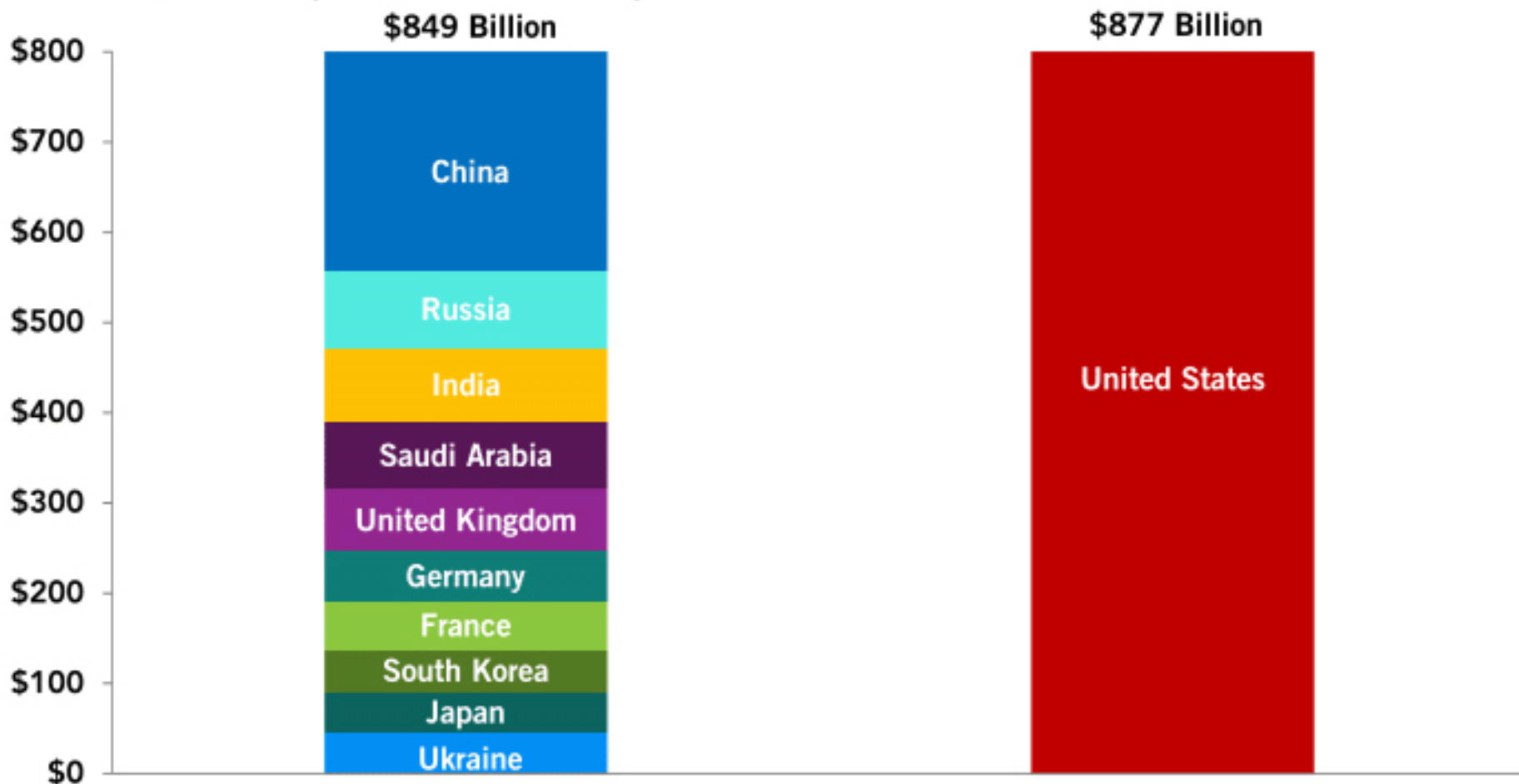
For further explanation, please go to [warresisters.org](http://warresisters.org). These figures are from an analysis of detailed tables in the *Analytical Perspectives* book of the *Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2020*. The figures are Federal Funds, which do not include Trust funds — such as Social Security — that are raised and spent separately from income taxes. What you pay (or don't pay) by April 15, 2019, goes to the Federal funds portion of the budget. The government practice of combining Trust and Federal funds began during the Vietnam War, thus making

**Government Deception**  
The pie chart (right) is the government view of the budget. This is a distortion of how our income tax dollars are spent because it includes Trust Funds (e.g. Social Security), and most of the past military spending is not distinguished from nonmilitary spending. For a more accurate representation of how your Federal income tax dollar is really spent, see the large graph.



## The United States spends more on defense than the next 10 countries combined

### DEFENSE SPENDING (BILLIONS OF DOLLARS)



SOURCE: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Military Expenditure Database*, April 2023.

NOTES: Figures are in U.S. dollars converted from local currencies using market exchange rates. Data for the United States are for fiscal year 2022, which ran from October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022. Data for the other countries are for calendar year 2022. The source for this chart uses a definition of defense spending that is more broad than budget function 050 and defense discretionary spending.



How might our tax money be spent if we hadn't given the U.S. military \$716 billion in 2019?

“The military budget crowds out spending that could make America more just. In the United States, millions struggle to meet their basic needs. Paring back the Pentagon budget by \$300 billion — a modest step that would still leave it at 1990s levels — would free up resources for domestic needs while weakening the military’s ability to do harm abroad.”

(Source: <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2018/09/pentagon-budget-spending-war-military>)

**3% of U.S. military  
spending could end  
starvation on earth.**



WORLD **BEYOND** WAR.org  
a global movement to end all wars

A blacksmith is working at an anvil, with bright sparks flying from the point of contact. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the sparks and the heat of the work.

# RAWTOOLS, INC



**FORGING PEACE  
DISARMING HEARTS**

**The Church Peace Tax Fund  
is available to:**

**Underwrite peace education  
and action in the church**

Recipients include: (2021) Michelle Armster, Dona Park, (2022) John Stoner, Clara Weybright, (2023) Jonathan Kuttub, Sydney Leah Bontrager (2024) Abby Endashaw, Tina Schlabach



## The Church Peace Tax Fund is available to:

Provide a Bring the Peace award to a Legacy Peacemaker and a Young Peacemaker each year.

A Legacy Peacemaker has devoted their life to peace & justice work.

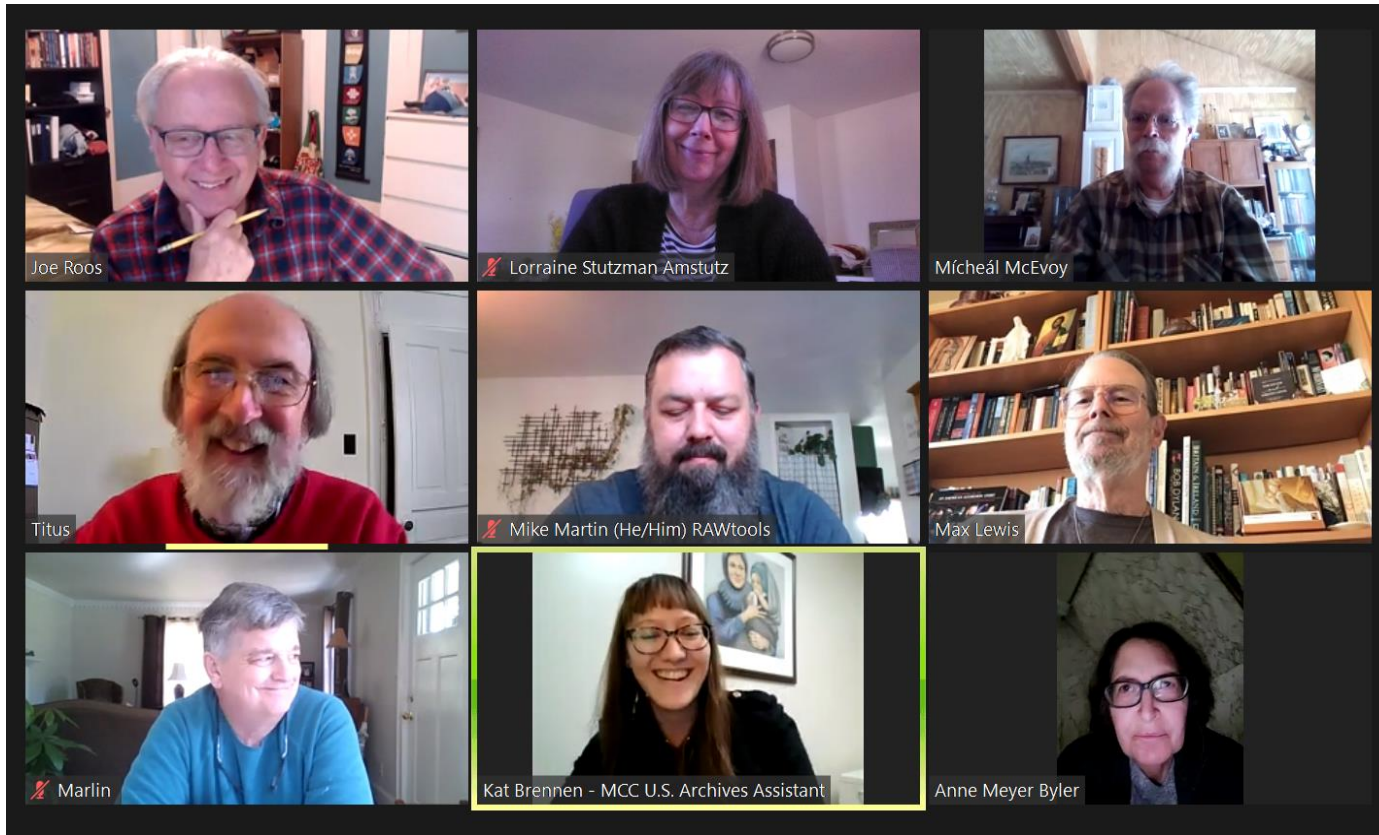




**The Church  
Peace Tax Fund  
provides  
scholarships  
for youth to  
participate in  
Mennonite  
Central  
Committee U.S.  
Peacebuilders  
Trainings**

MCC photo/Christy Kauffman

# The Church Peace Tax Fund supports The Peaceful Options for Training and Careers (POTC) alternatives to enlistment project



SCAN HERE

“This project goes beyond traditional counter-recruitment efforts by working with individual youths to find meaningful opportunities. In a highly militarized society, it is a practical way to embody our faith commitment to peace.”

-Titus Peachey, Steering Committee Member

## The Church Peace Tax Fund supports Mennonite Action

MC USA has awarded Mennonite Action an unrestricted \$10,000 grant from the Church Peace Tax Fund. Mennonite Action is an independent, grass roots movement of Mennonites taking public action to stop war and end the occupation of Palestine.



Photo Credit: Mennonite Action



Photo Credit: H.A. Penner

As a peace church, one of our core values is resistance to war, both in our neighborhoods and overseas.

This Learn Pray Join focuses on the Cost of War, in collaboration with the [POTC](#) initiative, which seeks to reinvigorate the collective voice against the destructive powers of militarism.

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. John 14:27*

SCAN HERE



# COST WAR

Learn, Pray, Join



**This Church Peace Tax  
Fund proposal seeks to  
strengthen and inspire  
the partnership  
between 21<sup>st</sup>-century  
conscientious objectors  
and MC USA, both  
locally and nationally,**

- to bear witness to the good news of Jesus Christ in a world involved with endless war in the pursuit of imperial control;
- to encourage and strengthen the 21<sup>st</sup> century witness of the Mennonite Church USA regarding Jesus' way of nonviolence and peace;
- to provide opportunities for war tax redirectors to channel their "conscripted" income toward meeting human needs and engaging in activities of social uplift;
- to persuade Congress to pass the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill (currently H.R . 1947);
- to reduce annual U.S. military budgets;
- to decrease the carbon footprint of the military-industrial complex on our planet;
- to increase federal spending on legitimate human needs world-wide;
- to have conscientious objection to military taxation included as a human right in the First Amendment "free exercise of religion" clause of the U.S. Constitution; and
- to care for all of God's creation, promote the nonviolent life and teachings of Jesus, enhance the mission of the church and advance the development of the human race.
- May God bless this undertaking!

# Please consider contributing to the MC USA Church Peace Tax Fund



SCAN HERE



Image by Jesse Graber