

Trinity College

Trinity College Digital Repository

Resist Newsletters

Resist Collection

5-30-1997

Resist Newsletter, May 1997

Resist

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/resistnewsletter>

Recommended Citation

Resist, "Resist Newsletter, May 1997" (1997). *Resist Newsletters*. 293.
<https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/resistnewsletter/293>

Funding social change since 1967

RESIST

Celebrating 30 Years

A Call to Resist Illegitimate Authority

May 1997

Making Money for Social Change

Activists Bank on Community Currency

SUSAN MEEKER-LOWRY

The fabric of our local communities today is being torn and shredded by the corporate-controlled status quo. Chain stores, which sell the same mass-produced goods in Vermont as they do in Texas, are replacing the small, locally-owned hardware, drug, clothing, and book stores. And the money spent in these stores goes to the same corporate headquarters—out of town, out of state, often out of country. One strategy used to counter this trend is community-based currency.

Since community currency can only be used locally, the money stays in the community rather than flowing out into the coffers of multinational corporations. In the short term, local currency benefits individuals and small businesses directly by increasing spending power. But it is in the medium to long term that the real social change potential of community currencies will become apparent.

Susan Witt with the E. F. Schumacher Society in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, sees local currency programs as part of a larger strategy to strengthen regional

economies. (The E. F. Schumacher Society has been at the forefront of community-based economics since it was founded in 1980 to promote the work of E. F. Schumacher, author of *Small is Beautiful*.) Witt explains, "Basically, we're looking to

the communities can regain independence and begin to unplug from the federal system: to take back their rights to generate their own regional currencies."

History of Local Currencies

People have always traded and bartered with each other. In the early days, money was generally a commodity—something valued by the people who agreed to use it.

Iron nails were used as money in Scotland, dried cod in Newfoundland, sugar in some West Indies Islands, salt in ancient Rome, wampum by Native Americans, corn in Massachusetts in the 1600s. Sometimes money was backed by a commodity.

For example, the first Latin coins were stamped with the image of a cow and redeemable for cattle.

Paper money was created in the 1700s and was basically an IOU backed by gold and silver. But these standards were abandoned (first in 1933 by President Roosevelt for U. S. citizens, then in 1971 by President Nixon for everyone else), so today our money is backed by nothing but promises (and debt).



Alternative currency builds on a barter system. *Illustration by Jim Houghton*

find the way in which wealth generated in the region can be kept in the region. Our local banks, which did a very good job of that in the past, have now been bought up by larger and larger holding companies. . . . A regional currency is ultimately the way

continued on page two

Activists Bank on Community Currency

continued from page one

Community currency isn't new. In fact, it wasn't until 1913 that the Federal Reserve Act mandated a central banking system. Before that Act, currency in the U.S. was based on everything from lumber to land. Then, during the Great Depression of the 1930s, scrip was often issued and exchanged for goods and services when federal dollars were scarce. Examples include wooden money in Tenino, WA; cardboard money issued in Raymond, WA with a picture of a big oyster on the back; and corn-backed money in Clear Lake, IA. Scrip was even issued by Vassar seniors that consisted of pea green, blue, and yellow cards. Scrips were used to pay teachers in Wildwood, NJ; to make the payroll in Philadelphia and numerous other cities and towns across the country. Scrips were issued by state governments, school districts, merchants, business associations, various agencies, even individuals.

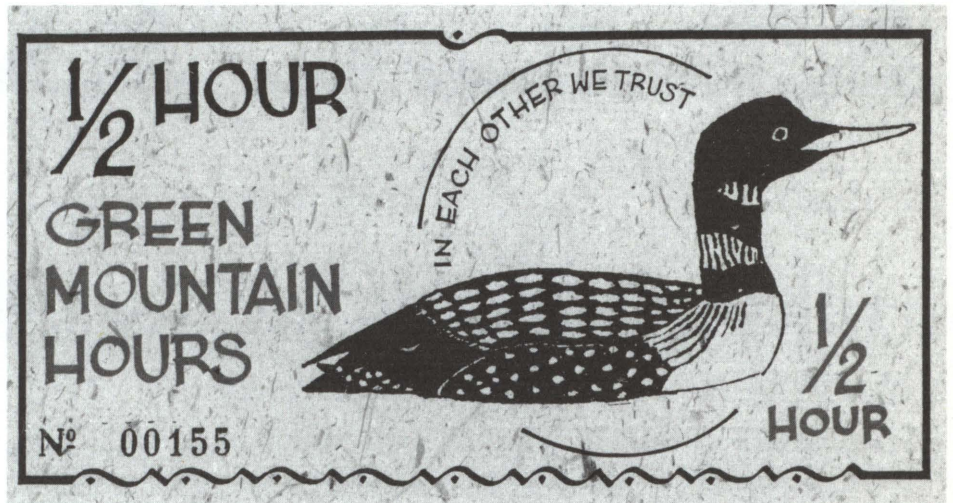
Today's community currencies, like those of the Depression, are varied and diverse. Some are true currencies—that is, they physically exist and are traded for goods and services like federal dollars. Other systems are actually barter or work exchange networks with no physical currency exchanged. The "rules" for these currencies also vary, depending on the needs and desires of community members. What they have in common is a commitment to community building, to supporting what's local, and to gaining a greater understanding of the role of economics and money in our daily lives. Local currencies are backed by something tangible that the community agrees has value, as the following examples illustrate.

LETS

LETS is a local currency system created by Michael Linton in the Comox Valley of British Columbia in 1983. As an unemployed computer programmer with an interest in community economics, Linton saw that many people were in a similar position: they had valuable skills they could offer each other yet had no money. He also saw the limitations of a one-on-one barter system. If a plumber wanted the services of an electrician, but the electrician didn't need plumbing help, the transaction couldn't take place. LETS solves the problem by opening the exchange to a whole community of members.

Here's how it works: Joe cuts firewood for Mary, who is a welder. Mary is now in debt to the system for the amount of the transaction (\$75.00, let's say), and Joe's account is credited for that amount. A few days later, Joe calls Mark for help fixing his car. Joe's credit is reduced by the \$50.00 Mark charged and Mark's is credited with

nesses that joined, typically accepting 25 percent payment in LETS, found that their business increased. In Western Australia, it is estimated that LETS systems pumped the equivalent of A\$3 million into the economy, which grew to include 1,500 businesses the first year. The same "rule" applies to these systems: businesses can



Green Mountain HOURS represent a growing portion of the economy in Central Vermont. This currency is printed on paper made locally from corn leaf or hay.

that amount. Then Mark wants some welding, calls Mary and so it goes. The unit of exchange, what Linton calls "the green dollar," remains where it is generated, providing a continually available source of liquidity. The ultimate resource of the community (the productivity, skills, and creativity of its members) is not limited by lack of money. And these resources are the "backing" behind green dollars.

Today there are numerous LETS systems, and variations on the theme in the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia. There are nearly 200 LETS in Britain.

Australia offers a major LETS success story. When Britain joined the European Union's Common Market, Australia lost its main export market. Food stocks destined for Britain had to be destroyed, and unemployment and bankruptcy became common. But LETS had found its way to Australia, providing welcome relief to people who became involved in these non-monetary economies that developed in scattered communities around the country.

In 1992, the Australian government invited Linton to set up LETS throughout the country, with the government providing funds for education, publicity, computer equipment, and other expenses. Busi-

RESIST



ILLEGITIMATE AUTHORITY
Funding social change since 1967

For information and grant guidelines, write to: RESIST, 259 Elm Street, Suite 201, Somerville, MA 02144; resistinc@igc.apc.org

RESIST Newsletter (ISSN 0897-2613) is published ten times a year by RESIST, Inc., 259 Elm Street, Suite 201, Somerville, MA 02144 (617)623-5110. The views expressed in articles, other than editorials, are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the RESIST staff or board.

RESIST Staff: Robin Carton
Carol Schachet

RESIST Intern: Danya Greenfield
Staff Assistant: Dillon Paul

Newsletter Editor: Carol Schachet
Printing: Red Sun Press

Printed on recycled paper with soy ink.

only spend LETS units locally. As a result, some give their earnings to charity and then qualify for a tax rebate. LETS earnings donated to charity have enabled churches to help unemployed youth and provide other necessary services. Patrica Knox, writing in the Winter 1995 *Earth Island Journal* observes, "If the global economy crashes, Australia would be the country most likely to survive, having developed a thriving alternative economy."

LETS is not without its problems, of course. One of the most commonly asked questions is, "What about a person who spends heavily in the system and then is unable or unwilling to repay?" In the early days Linton said this didn't happen often enough to be an issue.

But as the years passed, some systems,

including the one in the Comox Valley, experienced high levels of debt. One group decided to impose a 300-clam (the name of their currency) limit for the first year of membership, and 500 thereafter in response to problems posed by transiency within the community.

Scrip

Robert Swann, president of the E.F. Schumacher Society, was involved in economic alternatives for years before the Society was founded in 1980. With Ralph Borsodi, he pioneered the community land trust model in the 1960s, and in the 1970s developed the revolving loan fund model with the Institute for Community Economics. In addition to questioning conventional private land ownership and project financ-

ing (both of which are skewed to benefit monied interests over the rest of us), Swann has tirelessly sought alternatives to the federal currency system.

In 1989, a deli, well loved by many people in Great Barrington, MA, had to relocate because its lease was running out and a new lease would double the rent. Frank, the owner of the deli, went to several banks to borrow money to move to another location and was turned down. Finally he approached SHARE (Self-Help Association for a Regional Economy), the Schumacher Society's loan-collateralization program. Susan Witt, SHARE's administrator, suggested that he issue his own currency—Deli Dollars—and sell them to his customers to raise the money he needed. Each

continued on page four

Ithaca HOURS Makes Social Change Pay

"Print Money Locally and Make Revolution Globally"

PAUL GLOVER

Revolutions are assumed to begin with Urgent manifestos, grand congresses and speeches, proceeding to general strikes and street fighting. There is now, however, a spectre haunting capitalism that seeks instead merely to dissolve it city-by-city, to take away its authority nonviolently, and to overthrow its government.

I'm talking about locally printed and maintained currency systems. Activists in Ithaca, NY, began printing our own money in 1991 and now trade it for nearly everything we need. Each Ithaca HOUR is valued at \$10, double the federal minimum wage. To date, \$60,000 worth of Ithaca HOURS have recirculated within our community, buying thousands of goods and services including food, clothing, mortgage payments and rent worth an estimated \$2,000,000. By this means we have taken responsibility for issuing money, backing it by laboring people rather than capital markets. In addition to using Ithaca HOURS for purchasing goods and services, participants have been making grants of HOURS to community organizations, and lending HOURS (micro loans \$50-\$1,000) without charging interest.

As importantly, Ithaca HOURS helps connect local people as resources for each

other, rather than as competitors for scarce dollars. This decreases the brutal competition for jobs which can exacerbate racial conflicts.

HOURS have made us bold enough to take further steps in building an alternative economic system. For example, we're now creating our own nonprofit Health Fund. About 40 percent of Ithaca's residents have no health insurance, according to a random community-based survey. The Health Fund enables residents to support each other, with less dependence on giant insurers. We've begun by emphasizing preventive and innovative care, then we expect to hire salaried doctors (partly with HOURS) to meet our needs.

We're intending, with HOURS, to fund municipal projects such as extensive weatherization, transit extension, and the purchase of land and easements for local-

serving organic agriculture. Further job creation and import replacement (local ecological manufacture of shoes, pasta, soap, tools, etc.) become more possible as our money supply expands.

Rather than isolating Ithaca, local currency makes us strong enough to reach out to other communities, to visit them, to import and export more than before. So far, Ithaca's HOUR example has spread to 45 cities and towns in North America. Together we represent a grassroots national product that puts people at the center of our economy, making community while making a living.

Paul Glover is an economist and community organizer who founded Ithaca HOURS. Ithaca HOURS received a grant from RESIST in 1996.

Currency Starter Kits

Ithaca HOURS offers two resources for individuals or communities interested in starting a local alternative currency project. The Hometown Money Starter Kit is available for 2.5 HOURS, or \$25; and the video can be purchased for 1.5 Hours, or \$15. For more information or to order, contact: HOUR Town, Box 6578, Ithaca, NY 14851; 607/272-4330; www.publiccom.com/web/ithacahour.

continued from page three

note sold for \$9 and could be redeemed for \$10 worth of food, and was dated so that redemption was staggered over time.

"I put 500 notes on sale and they went in a flash. It was astonishing," Frank said. Before long, Deli Dollars were turning up all over town as people exchanged them instead of U. S. dollars for goods, services, or debts. In effect these paper notes, which were essentially nothing more than small, short-term loans from customers, became a form of community currency. They so excited the people of Great Barrington that they were followed by Farm Preserve Notes issued cooperatively by Taft Farms and the Corn Crib. Each farm raised about \$3,500 the first year and issued new notes in succeeding years. Five other businesses also issued scrip, including the Monterey General Store, and Kintaro restaurant and sushi bar. Together, these businesses raised thousands of dollars that they couldn't have

Participants are able to use HOURS for rent, plumbing, carpentry, car repair, chiropractic services, food, firewood, child care, and other goods and services.

obtained through conventional sources to finance their operations .

Ithaca Hours

In the U.S., the community currency receiving the most attention these days is the Ithaca HOUR in Ithaca, New York. The system was created in 1991 by Paul Glover, a community economist, ecological designer, and author of *Los Angeles: A History of the Future*. Since then, close to \$50,000 in local currency has been issued to over 900 participants and has been used by hundreds more.

While this may not sound like much, these HOURS have circulated within the community many times generating hundreds of thousands of dollars of local trading, adding substantially to what Paul calls "our grassroots national product."

Each Ithaca HOUR is equivalent to \$10.00 because that's the approximate average hourly wage in Tompkins County. The notes come in five denominations from a two-HOUR note down to a one-eighth HOUR note, and the designs feature native flowers, waterfalls, crafts, farms, and people respected by the community. Since the currency must be easily distinguishable from federal currency, they are a slightly different size from federal bills and are multicolored, some are even printed on locally made watermarked cattail paper. Participants are able to use HOURS for rent, plumbing, carpentry, car repair, chiropractic services, food (two large locally-owned grocery stores as well as farmer's market vendors accept them), firewood, child care, and numerous other goods and services. Some movie theaters accept HOURS as do bowling alleys and the local Ben & Jerry's.

Participants pay one U.S. dollar to join and receive four HOURS when agreeing to be listed as backers of the money. A free newsletter, *Ithaca Money*, is published six times a year and lists a directory of members' services and phone numbers, as well as related articles, ads, and announcements. Every eight months those listed may apply to be paid an additional two HOURS for their continued participation. This is how the supply of currency in the community is carefully and gradually increased.

While ostensibly everyone's work is valued equally, some negotiation does take place for certain professions like dentists, lawyers, massage therapists, and the like who typically make more than \$10 an hour. Glover explains, "With Ithaca HOURS, everyone's honest hour of labor has the same dignity. Still, there are situations where an HOUR for an hour doesn't work. For example, a dentist must collect several

RESIST is on the Move

After months of searching and negotiating, RESIST's office moved to a wheelchair-accessible office building in the Davis Square area of Somerville. The new location offers easy access to public transportation and added floor space for both interns and a grants library.

Numerous factors prompted the move, but it was our recognition that we were not adhering to our own funding criteria that pushed us into action. RESIST prioritizes funding groups and events that accommodate participation by people with a range of abilities—including handicapped-accessible locations and sign language interpretation. However, the office of RESIST was located for the past 10 years on the second floor of an old building without an elevator or chair lift. While we enjoyed the companionship of other radical groups and the low rent, we could not remain in a space that remained inaccessible to many people who might either work or visit the office.

As with all non-profit organizations, RESIST's board was faced with the reality that following one's convictions can be costly. In our case, moving to a wheelchair-accessible space meant more than doubling our relatively deflated rent. While as a proportion of our overall expenses the rent remains low, it was still an act taken with full awareness that we had to "put our money where our mouth is."

During the process of packing, moving and setting up, we have done our best to maintain both the Grants and the Newsletter programs. We apologize, however, you have received any materials late.

For those individuals and groups in the Boston-area, we welcome visitors. We are in the process of forming a "Grants Library" to help radical groups find additional funding sources without having to go to larger, more traditional grant libraries.

Special thanks to those who helped us in our move, including our architect Susanne May; packers Eileen Bolinsky, Pam Chamberlain, Louis Kampf, Dillon Paul and Susan Trotz; movers Dan's Van; EVB Designs; and the patience of our many supporters.

Please send any letters, donations, or applications to our new address:

**259 Elm Street • Suite 201
Somerville • MA 02144
617 • 623 • 5110**

HOURS for each work hour because the dentist and receptionist and assistant are working together, using equipment and materials that they must pay for with dollars. So, a lot of negotiating must take place.”

Potluck dinners are held monthly during which members get together and discuss HOUR-related business. Occasionally members decide to grant HOURS to a well-deserving community organization. So far, more than \$4,000 has been donated to 20 community organizations. Members have plans to develop a community cannery, to start a recycling warehouse, and to buy land to be held in trust. “We regard HOURS as real money, backed by real people, time, skills, and tools,” Glover states. HOUR Loans are made without interest charges.

Tools for Change?

People often ask, “Are local currencies political or economic enterprises?” Here in Central Vermont we did not promote Green Mountain HOURS as a political project because we felt it would limit involvement to those who feel comfortable participating in political activities. Instead we wanted to reach out into the wider community, to everyone and anyone, regardless of their politics. We did, however, promote the project as a way to keep our money in the local community and as a way to have a say about the type of enterprises we want to see here. Of course we also stressed the financial benefits to individuals.

In reality, local currency projects are extremely political. Educating people about the project inevitably brings up other, broader topics like the money (its history, what it is, how it works, etc.), trade and national/international markets, economic injustice, local control, and similar issues.

To intentionally remove ourselves from the larger, global market in favor of creating stronger local ones is a political statement with repercussions that extend beyond our local communities. In fact, it is my opinion that originators of currency systems have a responsibility to educate members regarding these larger issues. This is not to say that everyone has to agree,

individuals in the system in favor of conventional consumer roles? How to value goods and services is also an issue. Should participants put a price on their services, just like in the conventional money system, or be more creative? Should an HOUR have any dollar value at all? Could it represent just an hour of time? Finally, if we want to get away from the

feelings of greed, competition, scarcity, powerlessness, and inequity engendered by conventional money systems, why create another form of money? Why not do away with currency and move toward a system that provides everyone with what they need in exchange for labor?

The problem (and the beauty) of models like LETS or HOURS is the specifics. Therefore, answers to these questions really depend on the community implementing them. Whether a system is designed merely to increase buying power, or to put a monkey wrench into business-as-usual depends on the values and politics of

those who create it. Today, most (if not all) groups currently involved in some kind of community currency system, whether the barter model or the HOUR model, have stated that community building is a major goal, if not *the* major goal, of the project.

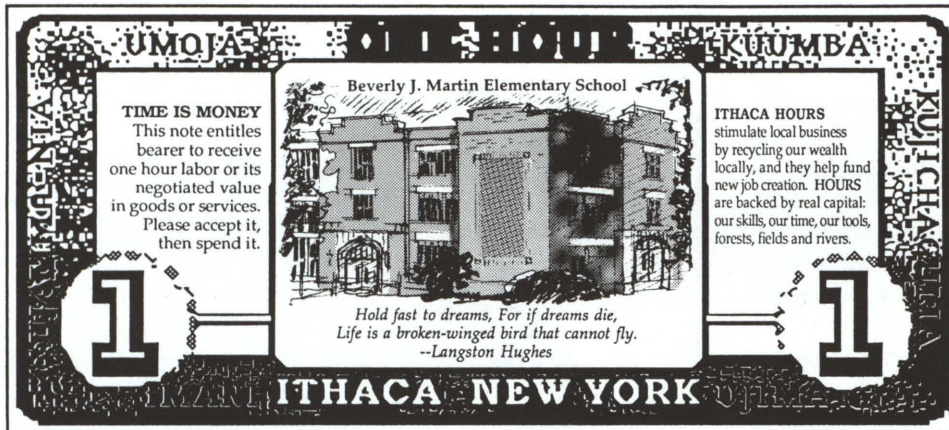
Dollars Versus Community Currency

Unlike conventional money that is based on scarcity and that fosters competition, community currencies are designed to include everyone who wants to participate. By doing so they take advantage of a wide range of skills and resources, unlike the conventional economy which values certain skills and devalues or ignores others.

continued on page six



Local currencies, like this Ithaca HOUR, reflect the values and character of the area. This HOUR note is the first U.S. money to honor an African-American woman.



but there should be an overarching vision that doesn't get lost in the day-to-day practicalities. This is one way that local currency projects can be an important tool for social change.

It is important to look at currency systems with a critical eye. What prevents a system like HOURS from becoming just like federal money? Once people become used to it, won't it feel like just another commodity to earn and spend? While the principle of “everybody's work is equal” sounds good, the fact is the HOUR system admits this is not true for all members. Where's the equity in this? Another concern is the role of business: will business participation limit the relationships between

continued from page five

As mentioned earlier, federal dollars tend to flow out of local communities where they are most needed to those who already control large pools of wealth like banks and corporations. The very nature of community currency prevents this outflow.

Further, there is no benefit to hoarding large amounts of community currency

portant for those implementing it to have an understanding of the larger picture of which their project is a part. In the case of currency, we need to understand the history of money and trade relationships. We need to have an understanding of the role of markets in creating communities and interpersonal relationships, not to mention the hidden and not-so-hidden agendas of

communities. Currency activists say, "Of course. That's why we're doing it."

On the level of the individual, community currencies can be empowering as they encourage us to consider offering skills and/or services to the community that we may not have previously considered "marketable." Our communities benefit for all the reasons already stated. And over time, it is possible that as more systems are created and reach maturity we could participate in the biggest boycott of all: people employed within local systems, earning and spending local currency. The huge corporation is simply unnecessary. A wild fantasy? Who knows. Why don't we find out?

Susan Meeker-Lowry helped launch Green Mountain HOURS, a local currency in Central Vermont, which received a grant from RESIST in 1996. She is also the author of Economics as if the Earth Really Mattered (1986) and Invested in the Common Good (1995), both by New Society Publishers. Portions of this article are reprinted from Z Magazine (July/August 1995).

Community currency can't be invested in the stock market, it is worth nothing on international currency markets, and you probably wouldn't want to will a bunch of it to your grandchildren.

since it is worth something only in local trade. Community currency can't be invested in the stock market, it is worth nothing on international currency markets, and you probably wouldn't want to will a bunch of it to your grandchildren (except as a matter of curiosity). "HOUR money has a boundary around it," Glover explains, "so HOUR labor cannot enrich people who then take our jobs away to exploit cheap labor elsewhere. It must be re-spent in the community from which it comes. It does not earn bank interest so it is not designed for hoarding. It benefits us only as a tool for spreading wealth."

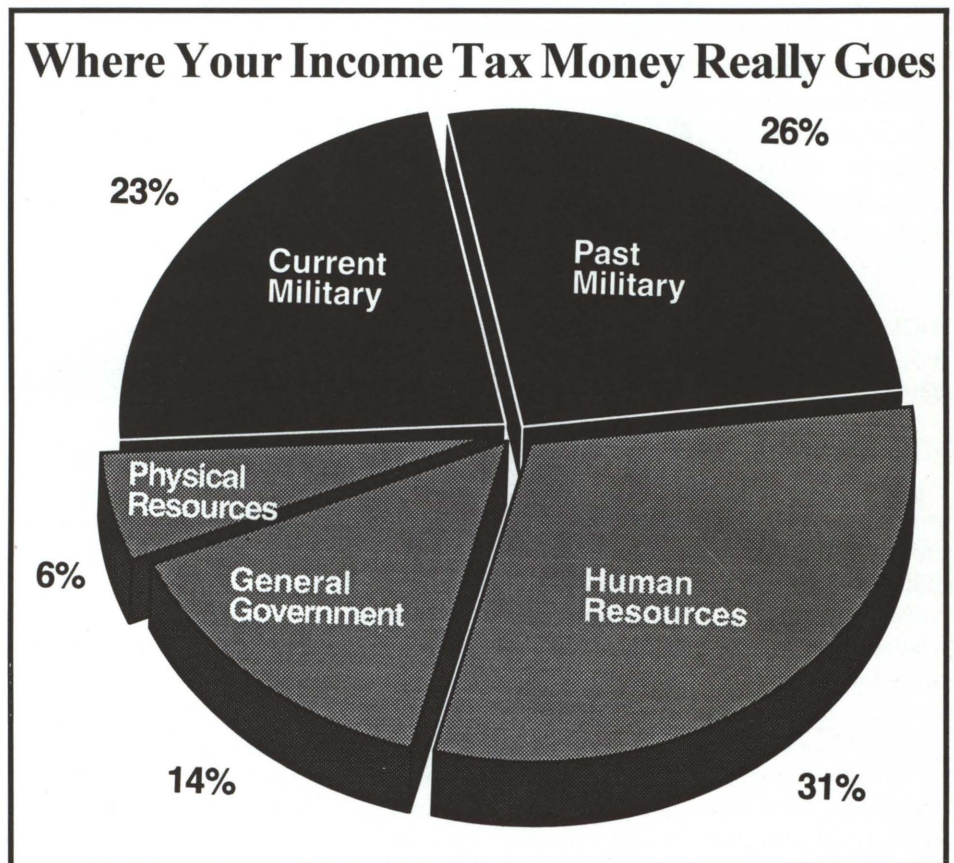
But what's to prevent HOURS from becoming like any other establishment currency? The values and consciousness of its members.

According to Glover, "Local currency activists generally seek to fundamentally transform society, rather than merely make it endurable." People starting currency systems must be very clear about what they are doing and why. If a goal is to change the system and move away from valuing people's time and labor in dollars; if a goal is to build relationships within the community based on mutual respect and reciprocity then members have a responsibility to take steps along the way to ensure these goals are being achieved and not left behind in the excitement of printing money and expanding individual spending power.

For any project, currency or not, to realistically work for systemic change it is im-

portant for those implementing it to have an understanding of the larger picture of which their project is a part. In the case of currency, we need to understand the history of money and trade relationships. We need to have an understanding of the role of markets in creating communities and interpersonal relationships, not to mention the hidden and not-so-hidden agendas of

national and international markets. To intentionally remove ourselves from these larger markets in favor of creating stronger local ones is a political statement with repercussions that extend beyond our local



The War Resisters League created this chart based on a line-by-line analysis in the *Analytical Perspectives* book of the *Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 1998*. The percentages are Federal Funds, calculated after removing Trust Funds (such as Social Security) which are raised and spent separately from income taxes.

You Get What You Pay For

Creating an Alternative Economy Through War Tax Resistance

KAREN MARYSDAUGHTER

Creating economic alternatives is about removing support from a system based on greed and exploitation, and instead building institutions that will lead to a more just and peaceful world. Local money systems, barter networks, cooperatives and collectives, land trusts, credit unions, community development loan funds, etc., are all efforts to use our labor and our resources for the common good. A great idea! But the very people who are working so hard to establish alternative economic systems are at the same time being coerced into using their labor and resources for what they *don't* want, in the form of federal income taxes.

Military-related expenses eat up about 50% of each federal income tax dollar taken out of people's paychecks. While we passionately strive each day to create a better world, militarism steadily undermines our efforts. Think about how hard we work to provide shelter for homeless women while our tax dollars are busy destroying the homes of more women than we can count. Or about doing a workshop for students on tolerance and diversity while our tax dollars pay the military to teach hatred and fear. Think about the organizing we've done to clean up the environment while government-financed nuclear weapons production is creating tons of radioactive waste.

War tax resistance is an alternative that allows people to pay for what they *do* want and *not* pay for what they don't. It is a form of boycott that has empowered social change movements for thousands of years and in many parts of the world. Conscientious objectors to war refuse to voluntarily pay either some or all of their federal taxes, using various methods from W-4 resistance to self-employment. They instead use that money to fund life-affirming projects.

War tax resistance serves a number of important functions in the broader social change movement. By providing a model of courageous risk-taking and successful resistance, it offers hope in the face of pervasive discouragement about "fighting City Hall." Although not everyone who is

exposed to war tax resistance will necessarily decide to try it, as with other forms of civil disobedience it inspires many people to take the next step in their own activism.

In addition, war tax resistance redirects actual cash dollars to the groups we support. Alternative funds, which are made up of refused tax money pooled for redistribution, are currently giving away over \$50,000 a year in the U.S. This may not be much compared to the military budget, but it is a lot to the groups we support, for whom \$100 can make all the difference at a crucial moment. An unknown number of individual resisters are also redirecting money each year.

Alternative Economic Systems

Additionally, because of a commitment to keep money away from the military, war tax resisters are especially active in efforts to initiate and maintain alternative economic systems. Jerry Chernow of Madison, Wisconsin, made his printing business into a collective to prevent IRS collections efforts. David Elliott has helped set up and maintain the Ithaca HOURS local money system in upstate New York. Barb Kass, Mike Miles, and their three children live at Anathoth Farm in rural Wisconsin, an intentional community that experiments with nonviolence and sustainable living. Betsy Corner and Randy Kehler's home that was seized by the IRS in 1989 is part of the Valley Community Land Trust. Larry Dansinger initiated the committee that founded the Waldo Community Development Credit Union in Belfast, Maine. These are common stories in the war tax resistance movement.

There is some risk involved in war tax resistance, but when people ask me if I'm afraid of refusing to give the government my taxes, I say that, considering what we are getting for our money, I am much more afraid of *not* refusing to give it to them. By far the greatest risks to me and all I love are the threat of war, the destruction of the environment, increased violence and repression, the dismantling of social supports, all created or exacerbated by militarism. What the IRS can do to me is rela-

tively minor in comparison. And the personal risks of redirecting my taxes seem like nothing in comparison to the risks of those facing the guns that U.S. tax dollars are buying, and of those starving because of federal spending priorities.

Overcoming "Economic Terrorism"

Even so, the thought of doing war tax resistance strikes fear into the hearts of most people. Not surprisingly, since the government is engaged in what I call "economic terrorism" against its own citizens, keeping enough people homeless on the streets so that the rest of us toe the economic line to save ourselves. However, to paraphrase a well-known Audre Lorde quote: paying taxes will not protect us! Our only real possibility for security is to take charge of our lives, including our money, and make the whole world a safer place.

All economies are based on labor and resources. Where do we want ours to go? In the federal budget debate, human and environmental needs are being cut drastically while military spending is barely mentioned. The same happens in our personal economic lives. We go to our meetings at the food co-op, the labor union, the environmental organization, and try to figure out how to keep going on less money, often fighting among ourselves for dwindling resources. Meanwhile, a lot of money is being taken out of our paychecks each week. If we want Congress to look at military spending in their funding debates, we also need to look at what we are personally contributing to the military when we do our own budgetary decision-making.

War tax resistance is a practical, effective alternative to our militaristic economic system. When enough of us decide to take charge of our tax money, the Navy *will* have to hold a bake sale to build its destroyers.

Karen Marysdaughter is the Coordinator for the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee (NWTRCC). Last year, NWTRCC received \$3,349 in donor-directed grants from RESIST. For more information on war tax resistance, contact NWTRCC at 1-800-269-7464.

As part of the series of reflections on RESIST's 30-year history, printed below are portions of the original "call to resist illegitimate authority" written in 1967 and signed by more than 20,000 people. The call was printed in the New York Review of Books, the Nation and other public forums, as well as used to organize resistance to the war in Vietnam. The document was used as evidence

against some signers who were brought to trial for their resistance to the war in Vietnam. To be historically accurate, we have not altered the gender exclusive language originally used in this call. To receive the entire "Call to Resist" send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the RESIST office, 259 Elm Street, Suite 201, Somerville, MA 02144; resistinc@jgc.apc.org.

A Call to Resist Illegitimate Authority

To the young men of America, to the whole of the American people, and to all men of good will everywhere:

1 An ever growing number of young American men are finding that the American war in Vietnam so outrages their deepest moral and religious sense that they cannot contribute to it in any way. We share their moral outrage.

2 We further believe that the war is unconstitutional and illegal. Congress has not declared a war as required by the Constitution. Moreover, under the Constitution, treaties signed by the President and ratified by the Senate have the same force as the Constitution itself. The Charter of the United Nations is such a treaty. The Charter specifically obligates the United States to refrain from force or the threat of force in international relations. . . . The United States has systematically violated all of these Charter provisions for thirteen years.

3 Moreover, this war violates international agreements, treaties and principles of law which the United States Government has solemnly endorsed. The combat role of the United States troops

in Vietnam violates the Geneva Accords of 1954 which our government pledged to support but has since subverted. The destruction of rice, crops and livestock; the burning and bulldozing of entire villages consisting exclusively of civilian structures; the interning of civilian non-combatants in concentration camps; the summary executions of civilians in captured villages who could not produce satisfactory evidence of their loyalties or did not wish to be removed to concentration camps; the slaughter of peasants who dared to stand up in their fields and shake their fists at American helicopters;—these are all actions of the kind which the United States and the other victorious powers of World War II declared to be crimes against humanity for which individuals were to be held personally responsible even when acting under the orders of their governments. . . .

4 We also believe it is an unconstitutional denial of religious liberty and equal protection of the laws to withhold

draft exemption from men whose religious or profound philosophical beliefs are opposed to what in Western religious tradition have long been known as unjust wars.

5 Therefore, we believe on all these grounds that every free man has a legal right and a moral duty to exert every effort to end this war, to avoid collusion with it, and to encourage others to do the same. . . . Each must choose the course of resistance dictated by his conscience and circumstances. . . .

6 We believe that each of these forms of resistance against illegitimate authority is courageous and justified. Many of us believe that open resistance to the war and the draft is the course of action most likely to strengthen the moral resolve with which all of us can oppose the war and most likely to bring an end to the war.

7 We will continue to lend our support to those who undertake resistance to this war. We will raise funds to organize draft resistance unions, to supply legal defense and bail, to support families and otherwise aid resistance to the war in whatever ways may seem appropriate.

8 We firmly believe that our statement is the sort of speech that under the First Amendment must be free, and that the actions we will undertake are as legal as is the war resistance of the young men themselves. In any case, we feel that we cannot shrink from fulfilling our responsibilities to the youth whom many of us teach, to the country whose freedom we cherish, and to the ancient traditions of religion and philosophy which we strive to preserve in this generation.

9 We call upon all men of good will to join us in this confrontation with immoral authority. Especially we call on universities to fulfill their mission of enlightenment and religious organizations to honor their heritage of brotherhood. **Now is the time to resist.**

Join the RESIST Pledge Program

We'd like you to consider becoming a RESIST Pledge.

Pledges account for over 30% of our income.

By becoming a pledge, you help guarantee RESIST a fixed and dependable source of income on which we can build our grant-making program. In return, we will send you a monthly pledge letter and reminder along with your newsletter. We will keep you up-to-date on the groups we have funded and the other work being done at RESIST.

So take the plunge and become a RESIST Pledge! We count on you, and the groups we fund count on us.

RESIST • 259 Elm Street • Suite 201 • Somerville • MA • 02144

Yes! I'll become a RESIST Pledge.

I'll send you my pledge of \$ _____ every month/two months/quarter/six months (circle one).

Enclosed is an initial pledge contribution of \$ _____.

I can't join the pledge program now, but here's a contribution of \$ _____ to support your work.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____