

Conscience and Peace Tax International

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The following information was received from members of the Peace Tax Seven, the group in the United Kingdom who have taken their war tax withholding case through every court available to them.

EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS REFUSES TO CONSIDER THE APPLICATION OF THE PEACE TAX SEVEN

The European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France, has refused to consider an application by seven peace campaigners seeking to pay taxes without paying for war.



The Court told lawyers acting for the group, the Peace Tax Seven, that their application "...did not disclose any appearance of a violation of the rights and freedoms set out in the [European] Convention." The group's case was first heard in the British High Court in 2005, and was then referred to Strasbourg on appeal.

Members of the group have campaigned internationally, have addressed the UN Human Rights Committee, and have also played a key role in the foundation of an international committee of legal experts on conscientious objection and peace tax.

While the Court decision ends the legal case, the seven individuals are nevertheless determined to continue on as a group. They are currently considering their next direction. Other international human rights review procedures do exist, and an expanded campaign is now under consideration.

Robin Brookes, a member of the Peace Tax Seven, said:

"We are deeply disappointed that the Court has not even given a full explanation of its decision not to hear the arguments, and we are, of course, frustrated with the apparent lack of regard shown for 20 years of legal change and development on the issue. The Court's decision plays into the hand of those who - unlike us - argue that effective campaigning requires a disregard for the law of the land, but we remain committed to working by every legitimate means towards a world in which taxpayers' money is spent to ensure peace by addressing the underlying causes of war, rather than neglecting these causes and prolonging the cycles of violence."

An increasing number of experts maintain that peace and security are best procured through nonviolent peacebuilding activities and proactive conflict prevention as alternatives to conventional armed military intervention. The preamble of a famous charter states that the peoples of the United Nations are determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Those who take this pledge to heart, as a conviction of personal conscience, are encouraged to seek the strength of a group like the Peace Tax Seven.

The Peace Tax Seven are supported by Conscience, the Peace Tax Campaign.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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