

Protest, arrests at nuclear site cap war tax resisters conference

Robyn Haas Joshua J. McElwee | Nov. 7, 2011 NCR Today

KANSAS CITY, Mo. -- Boil it down and war tax resisters have a simple strategy: Without taxes, the government can't buy guns and fight wars.

And, capping their annual conference this weekend with a protest outside the nation's first new nuclear weapons manufacturing facility in three decades, some 60 war tax resisters said yesterday that the government shouldn't be able to build such facilities either.

The protest, which saw five resisters arrested for acts of civil disobedience, was the latest in a series of actions organized to oppose construction of the some \$1.2 billion nuclear weapons plant, known simply as the Kansas City Plant. [53 people were arrested last May in a similar action](#) [1].

The arrests yesterday came after an hour-long gathering, which saw activists hold signs, sing songs, and listen to presentations from war tax resisters about their motivations for withholding their income taxes. Several of the signs read "No tax dollars for nuclear bombs."

Before their arrests, the five protestors linked elbows and walked up the driveway of the complex. As they crossed the property line, painted red on the ground, they were taken into custody by police officers.

In the speeches to the group, several protesters gave an idea of what motivates them.

Erica Weiland of Seattle said that the 17 resisters she had surveyed during the weekend had held back more than \$359,000 in taxes and represented a total of over 400 combined years of refusing to pay.

She said she was "proud to be making a stand for peace and justice" by her own refusal.

Jim Hannah of Independence, Mo., called for "scrap-piling" rather than stockpiling of nuclear weapons. "How much death and destruction do we need?" Hannah asked.

Bill Ramsey of St. Louis, Mo., defined war tax resistance as "a way to deny American militarism the space they need to operate."

Over the weekend, those gathered for the conference from across the country heard presentations from locals opposed to the construction of the nuclear facility. They also had the option to attend several sessions on war tax resistance across the country, and how to refuse to pay taxes legally.

Weiland and Hannah were in the group arrested Sunday. Joining them were Jason Rawn of Union, Maine; Kima Garrison of Portland, Ore.; and Charles Carney of Kansas City, Kan..

Weiland and Garrison were released on bond Sunday afternoon. Rawn, Carney, and Hannah were held overnight and are scheduled to be released on bond today. All five are due in court Jan. 17, 2012.

Editor's Note: *NCR's* web developer Robyn Haas, who was a part of the May protest at the nuclear site, wrote this report. An amateur photographer, Haas also took the photos below.

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