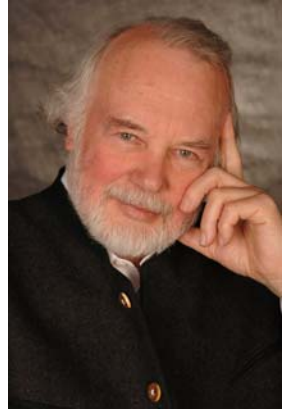


## Remembering Sepp (Josef) Rottmayr 1 April 1936-18 November 2014

“If many people do something together, more can be achieved” – this was the co-operative motto governing Sepp’s professional life. In practice and in books he worked on how to allow people with different qualifications to work together on an equal footing, independently and co-operatively together withing the same economic enterprise. His professional experience was *one* engine driving his peace work.



He was an active member of the peace movement: Network Peace Tax (Netzwerk Friedenssteuer e. V.), the Pax Christi group “Doing without Violence “ (Gewaltverzicht), the Munich Security Conference for Change (Münchener Sicherheitskonferenz Verändern e. V.) where among other offices he chaired the board. From 1986 he refused to pay taxes for use in military violence. In October 1996 in Düsseldorf Sepp first took part in a meeting of those who were refusing.

Sepp was a founder member of Network Peace Tax (2003), and as secretary up to 2007, he taught it with utmost care to run. Instead of going into well-deserved retirement, he joined, as a driving force, the working party “Legal Avenues”.

He occupied himself intensely with theological and critical reflection on the Christian arguments, in particular that of the general human responsibility to protect, which is supposed not totally to exclude the use of violence. His faith held against that: anybody who has accepted divine redemption is prepared to take on suffering and will, if necessary, sacrifice himself rather than use violence. The fact that Jesus, when taken prisoner, did not request the assistance of twelve legions of angels from his father, is a model for being prepared for sacrifice and the resulting redemption from the use of violence. As far as Sepp was concerned, in the event of a crisis involving violence the least that would be expected was neutral observation and, in a worst-case scenario, even the offer of oneself as a hostage, as a sign of one’s own willingness to reduce violence. He clearly criticized the fact that people equip themselves with weapons and other tools for violence and objected to being drawn into complicity with this through the financial link. The decisive factor is love, the universal power to unite, the divine original force which enables us to live with other people in a peaceful relationship.

Sepp was indefatigable in helping to develop legal texts, draft regulations and the bill for non-military taxes. It was due to his initiative that the International Conference for Refusal of Military Taxes and for Taxes for Peace held in 2006 in Woltersdorf near Berlin jointly put the right of freedom from violence into these words: “Every person is free to reject military violence. Therefore nobody must be forced to take part in military violence directly or indirectly”.

In the Friedenssteuer Nachrichten (newsletter of Network Peace Tax) of December 2008 Sepp described the effect he had on some people outside our group, to whom he appeared as somewhat potty. Adapting from his native Bavarian dialect: “Others think that we are pretty seriously potty – well, what do you expect from people from the peace movement? We don’t succeed, but we are what we are and – may we be considered blessed”.

In the weeks in hospital several friends from the Network experienced calm and mutually consoling hours with Sepp. Even in this situation he wrote yet another letter to Bishop Marx from the German Conference of Bishops, rooting his positions yet again in his Christian convictions.

Serious illness has robbed us of an amiable and thoughtful friend. The traces of this committed man will remain with and in us.

*German Network Peace Tax*