

A Bizzare Bazaar

you might say the internal revenue service threw a party for peace people at the national guard armory in boulder, colorado on november 18th. there were balloons, masks, cookies and plenty of laughter.

the improbable occasion was the auctioning of a 1969 volkswagon which the i.r.s. had confiscated last month from bob marcus for collection of \$1.25 in unpaid telephone tax. bob is a student at the university of colorado.

when the i.r.s.'s plans became known, institute/mountain west, a branch of the institute for the study of nonviolence, and denver war tax resistance decided to make good use of the opportunity. we sent out a leaflet to the 3500 people on the institute mailing list, telling them what had happened and asking that they contribute to a fund to buy bob's car back at the auction. it was explained that all money bid on the car above the unpaid tax and fees is refunded to the tax-(non) payer. we would buy the car with the donations. the excess money, when it found its way back to bob, would be put in the war tax resistance alternative fund. the action was billed as a joint i.r.s./institute for the study of nonviolence fund-raiser for war tax resistance.

about thirty people showed up at the auction, held in a stiff wind outside the armory. we

passed around cookies in shape of the resistance omega, tossed balloons of all colors into the air, and held signs which said "i ain't gonna pay for war no more" and "celebrate life—don't pay war tax." eight people registered as bidders, including at least one who was there because he wanted a 1961 volks, cheap.

beneath a skull and crossbones "jolly roger" kite that went wild in the wind, two revenueurs read the i.r.s. ground-rules. they told bob that he could still redeem the car. he stepped forward and said, "but can i redeem my soul?" they stated that they couldn't accept less than \$18.44 for the car and the bidding began:

\$ 18.44
\$250.00
\$251.00
\$275.00
\$276.00
\$276.00 and a cookie
\$277.00
sold.

the people cheered and then put their heads together to round up the money. it took about 20 minutes to complete the transaction, because much of the money was in \$1.00 bills and some of it in change.

the name of the highest bidder was patricia brown, but that didn't matter much, because bob had decided that he preferred bicycling to polluting the air and wanted the car to be used by a community of movement people in boulder.

after the i.r.s. got its blood money, and the institute expenses had been paid, the war tax resistance alternative fund had netted \$202.35 in addition, all the media covered the story extensively and pretty sympathetically. it can be said that the i.r.s. bought us tens of thousands of dollars worth of publicity for the idea of tax resistance. a final benefit is that we