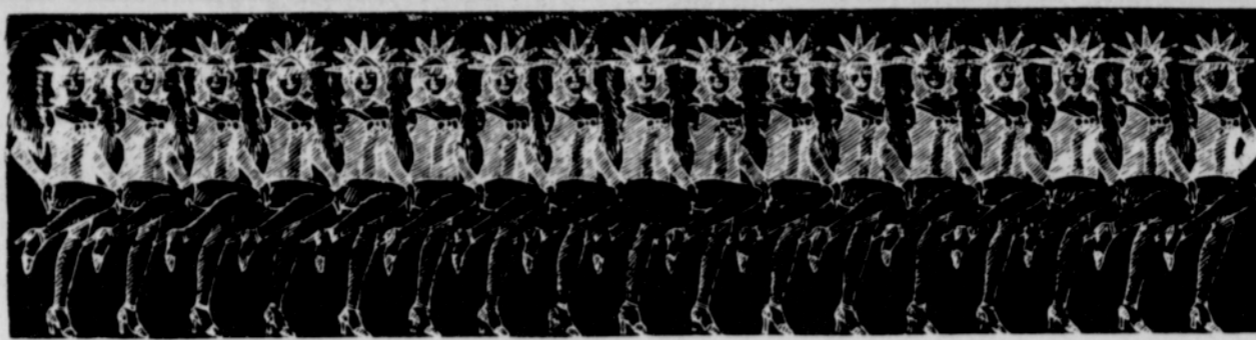
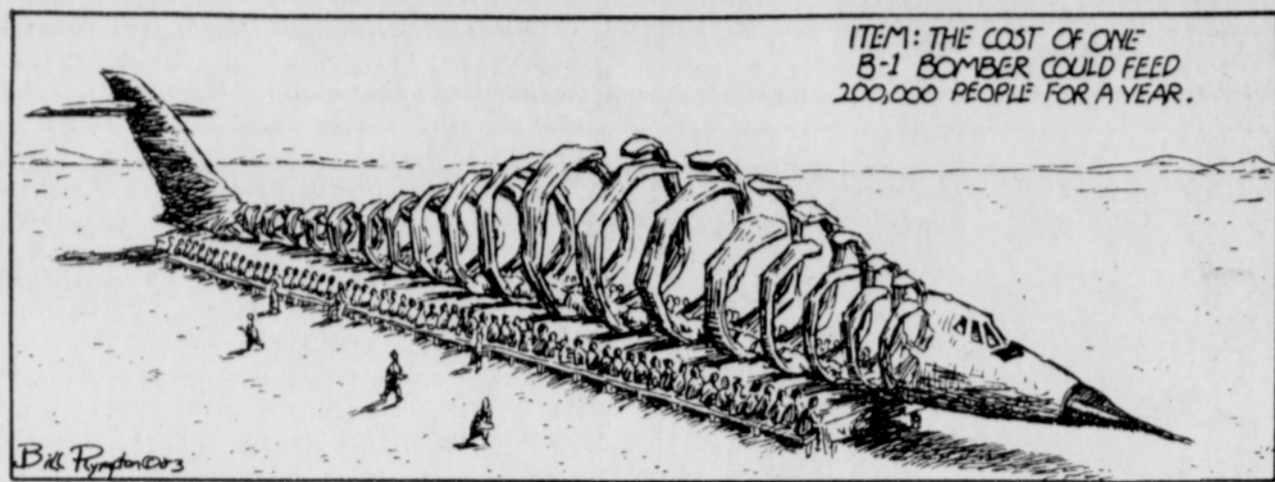


AMERICAN



GRAFFITI



ITEM: THE COST OF ONE B-1 BOMBER COULD FEED 200,000 PEOPLE FOR A YEAR.

WAR TAX RESISTANCE

FROM PAGE ONE

willingly paying taxes to a government that allows the massive weapons production that is taking place under the Reagan Administration. "I can't let money earned helping people go to killing," she said. Ann Huntwork agrees, though her taxes are collected each year in spite of her resistance. "... resistance is an opportunity for education, consciousness raising, individual integrity, and an eventual challenge to the system. The point is, you do it because it's the 'right thing', not necessarily because it will work."

The overriding reason tax resisters think it's the "right thing", and the commitment which separates them from their anarchist cousins, the survivalists, is the concern over the amount of money going to the Pentagon for research, development, and construction of weapons meant for war. Out of every tax dollar, sixty-four cents goes to the total military budget. Of that sixty-four cents, forty-six cents goes to the current military budget, eighteen cents covers the costs of past wars (five cents for veterans' benefits and thirteen cents for interest on the national debt). The Reagan Administration presently claims that fifty percent of the budget goes to human resources and only twenty-eight percent of it goes to the military. The President is able to make this claim because the total dollar amount in the general fund includes not only income, inheritance, and excise taxes, but trust funds. Trust funds, such as Social Security, Railroad Retirement, and the Highway Trust Fund, are set up for a specific purpose; the money in them comes from separate sources, and can only be spent as the fund designates. Neither Congress nor the President can reallocate trust fund monies to other areas. So the budget over which the President

has control is actually the total budget minus the trust fund monies. Of that amount, sixty-four percent is going to the military.

"The issue," said Mufti McNassar, Portland resident and tax resister, "is how complicit do you want to be in deathmaking? So many of the good things America has are somehow stolen from the poor somewhere. So, we decided not to incur a tax debt, and to live with the consequences of not incurring a tax debt."

Patrick and Mufti McNassar, like Genny Nelson, live in voluntary poverty, under the level of a taxable income. They, like Nelson, face the contradiction of having public schools, roads, libraries, and police and fire protection available to them without paying taxes for them. "It is a contradiction," said Mufti. "It's one we choose to live with. I know what I'm doing and why, and I believe it's right. Doing the right thing does not lie in procedures and structures, but in how closely our lives reflect the values we are called by the gospel to be living." They are not tax evaders, stresses Mufti, and they are not anarchists. "The justification for the state is to promote the common good, and the IRS is a legitimate representative of that state," Patrick explained. "Ideally the IRS asks an individual to contribute to the common good, and they have a right to do that. The state's contribution cannot be denied, but it's over-balanced by a commitment to militarism that represents an unprecedented threat to the common good. Our response is that we will contribute to the common good in a different way. We are, in a sense, calling the state on its responsibility towards the common good."

The McNassars are members of the Catholic Workers, a social justice organization founded by Dorothy Day, whose creed is to live

voluntary poverty and take personal responsibility for the needs of others. "Don't refer to the problem elsewhere, don't defer it, take care of it." In the past, this has meant that the McNassars ran a soup kitchen and opened their home to the homeless in a community of Catholic Workers in southeast Portland. About a year ago, when the land went up for sale and the community was forced to separate, the McNassars moved to a large rental house in the northeast section of the city with their five children. They are now in the process of reevaluating their tax resistance, because "the increase in rent means even if we don't eat, we have to earn enough to owe taxes," said Patrick. For a family of seven, the McNassars figured they could earn seven thousand dollars a year without incurring taxes. Now, their rent alone is six thousand dollars a year.

While the McNassar's tax resistance consists largely of living under taxable income, they also refuse each month to pay the once highly controversial federal telephone tax. The present phone tax was levied during the Viet Nam War to pay for war costs, and has been a visible and simple tool for war tax resisters since. The tax was ten percent in 1972, and was to be phased out at the rate of one percent a year. It went down slowly until 1981, when then-President Carter held it at two percent for an extra year. Down to one percent in 1982, it should have disappeared this year; President Reagan, however, raised it to three percent in January and plans to hold it there until 1985. Given the previous association of a phone tax with military spending, the Administration has been preparing reports through the Library of Congress which claim that the present tax is not a military tax, something that was not claimed during the Viet Nam War.

Refusing to pay the phone tax is fairly simple: the McNassars send a letter with their bill each month explaining how much money they have subtracted from payment and why. It doesn't affect their credit with the phone company, and Ma Bell just sends the information on to the government. Once, over a four to five



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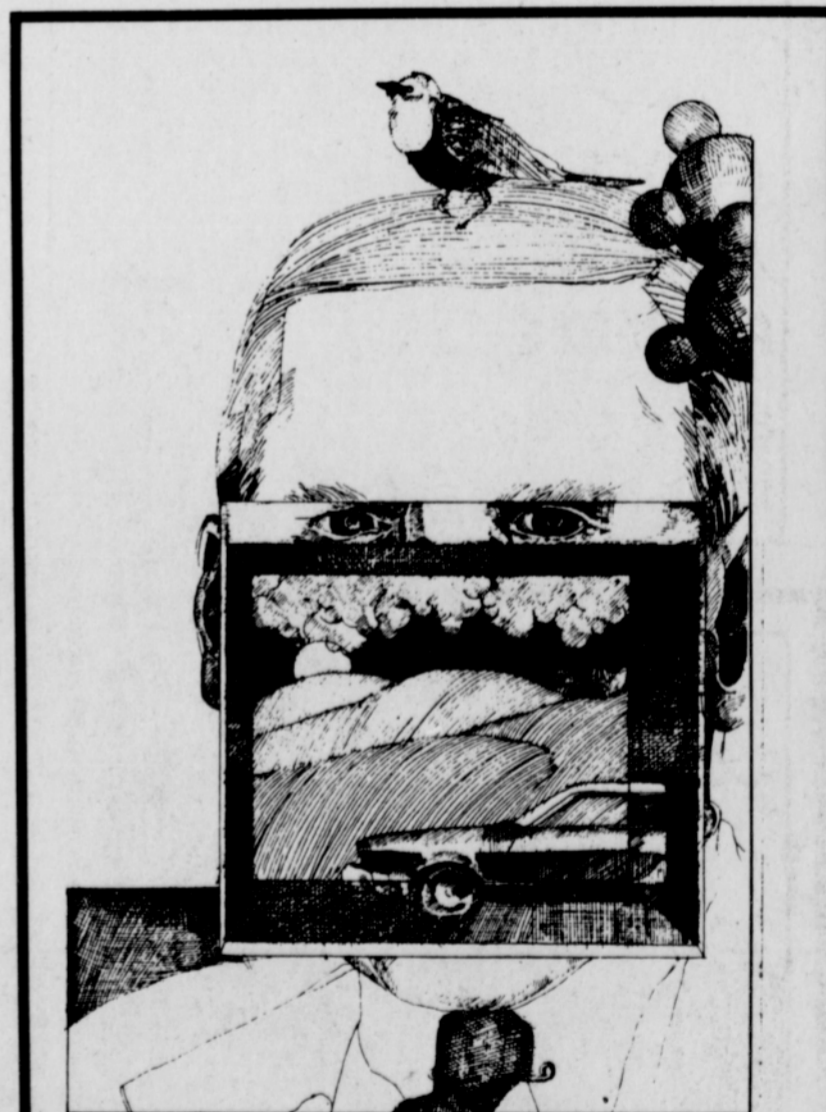
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