



Paul Azevedo

The Reactor

7-27-83

What were nice people like Diane Evans and Ethel Kirk doing in jail? You'll understand better if you know the jail was Santa Rita, and the two Pacificans together with hundreds of others, had set out to force the police in Alameda County to arrest them. The whole thing was as well planned as an event like this can be planned.

Their goal is to cut down on nuclear arms, achieve a nuclear freeze, something like that. Peace in the world is a good goal. The best in fact.

What's more, though Diane Evans (Letters, July 20) wasn't sure how I felt, it is my opinion that her actions were sincere, even admirable. I have always admired those who make sacrifices from idealistic motives.

Her goal was admirable. Was getting arrested the best way to achieve it? I don't know. Perhaps.

She expressed her concerns and her idealism by forcing her own arrest. She forced it by deliberately disobeying the law while being closely observed by persons sworn to uphold the law.

While, as I said, I admire her goals, I don't think it was fair to force Alameda authorities to make her a martyr. It put the citizens of Alameda County in the position of spending their tax money to advertise her political ideas over nationwide TV.

There are legal ways to express ideas. It is true they might be ignored, but that's the fate of most expressions of opinion, including most of mine, unfortunately.

Evans does strain her credibility when she says that TV coverage was not the purpose of the blockade. I can't believe that. An event as carefully staged as this one wasn't just for the benefit of a few hundred inconvenienced employees of the Lawrence Livermore Lab. TV, radio, newspapers, magazines...media coverage was the goal, the plan, the purpose. And they succeeded. They got more viewers and observers to pay attention to their ideas and over a longer period of time than they would have gotten otherwise. By playing the role of the underdog to the establishment, they received

sympathy they could have gotten in no other way.

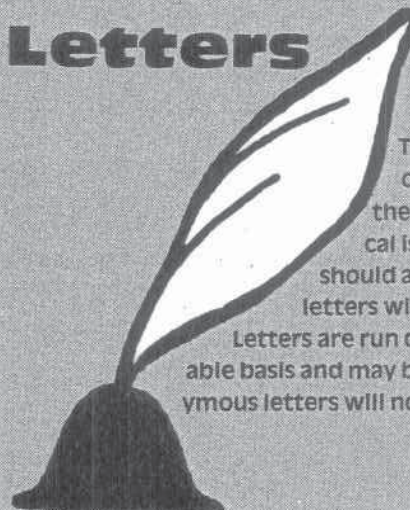
It is not illegal for anyone in this country to express his opinion, pro or con, on the nuclear freeze. He can write books, though they may not be published or read. He can write letters to editors and congressmen which may or may not be published or read. He can pass out leaflets, go door to door like Jehovah's Witnesses, or give speeches. If he can afford it, he can buy ad space, billboards, radio time, TV specials.

But if he chooses to get arrested, he must expect jail, fines, and yes, even probation. The probation will not stop anyone from expressing an opinion. It will, however, be a deterrent to breaking laws.

It is my right to advocate banning the bomb. However, if I take my little spray can and spray "ban the bomb" on the police chief's office door, I can't expect too much sympathy, but I can expect arrest.

It's hard to face when the whole world doesn't embrace your passionate commitments. Whether it is religion, politics or strongly held ideas about serious business like survival in a nuclear age, it's terribly discouraging to know that most of the world is either antagonistic, or at best, apathetic to your ideas. But that is also what freedom of thought is all about.

Letters



The Tribune welcomes letters to the editor on all local issues. Writers should attempt to keep letters within 250 words.

Letters are run on a space-available basis and may be edited. Anonymous letters will not be published.