

More than 'peaceniks' are looking towards future

I don't consider myself a "peacenik." I'm not really even an activist. But when I heard about a rally in Bangor, Washington, to protest the arrival of the seventh Trident submarine, I thought: enough is enough. How much longer will this crazy arms race go on? How long will I continue to support it with my silence?

So my sister, a grade school teacher in Portland, and I decided to pursue our curiosity and ventured up to the Puget Sound area last weekend. Neither of us had participated in a peace rally before, so we didn't know what to expect.

In Seattle on Sunday morning we planned to hear Bishop Michael Kenny of Juneau, Alaska, speak out against the arms race, and against the latest Trident in particular because it was named the "U.S.S. Alaska," after his state.

Reporter's notebook

by Sharon Bosserman

What we didn't plan was to witness a church full of whites, hispanics, asians and mostly blacks sing a long round of "Ain't gonna study war no more" to open their service. Were these people peaceniks? They seemed to be from all different ethnic groups and social classes — but all of them could sing. And they sang one peace song after another in a spirited gospel style.

Finally Kenny got up to preach. He told the congregation that hostility among nations starts with hostility among ourselves.

"Even if we did away with all weapons... the source of the weapons still lies in every one of us," he said.

Kenny said as Americans, we need to "identify ourselves with everyone," which he said includes members of all races, religions as well as gays, "war mongers," republicans and others. He said we need to accept and be one with others in our search for peace.

Kenny's presence in Seattle was not only to protest the arrival of the U.S.S. Alaska, but to show his support for Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle. Hunthausen was recently stripped of some of his authority by the Vatican in response to concerns about his stands on divorce, marriage, homosexuality and ecumenical matters.

"In case there is any doubt," said Kenny, "(my presence) is in support of Archbishop Hunthausen." The congregation loved both bishops.

We thought Kenny was pretty good, but had to leave the church quickly to catch a ferry to Bainbridge Island and then drive the rest of the way to Bangor.

En route to the naval base at Bangor, the Winslow ferry was full of Trident resisters. They wore t-shirts that said, "Resist Trident: For Love and For Life." Some of them wore "I Love Hun-

thausen" buttons. Probably a bunch of peaceniks, we thought, and decided to find out.

Ten-year-old Emanuel Stone from Seattle was a little shy talking with us, although he has been to rallies "lots of times." He said he didn't feel safe in Seattle "because of the weapons on the submarine."

Margaret Bromson, a day-care teacher in Seattle, has been to three rallies at Bangor. She said she was representing several older people who could not be at the rally themselves and to offer "prayerful support for people of peace." She thinks it is ridiculous to spend money on weapons when it is needed for education and welfare.

Bangor was beautiful. The browns and oranges of fall surrounded numerous water bodies and gave the land a healthy glow — despite the constant drizzle.

But when we arrived at the naval base itself, we too became a little uneasy. We stood on the railroad tracks in the same place where the "white train" people had been arrested numerous times. These are the same tracks that continue to carry trains loaded with equipment for the Trident submarines.

More than 500 people showed up to hear a variety of speakers at the rally. Shelley Douglass lives with her husband Jim in a house next to the tracks. Their non-violent protest group, Ground Zero, hands out "no-nuke" pamphlets to workers as they enter the base daily.

Douglass said the Trident submarine is a "negation of beauty." She talked about the elements and how they are shared by all people.

"These people on the other side of the (naval base) fence," she said, "they are one with us and share the elements with us."


On the fence hung a large sign with "Warning: Restricted Area" printed in big letters. When my sister and I moved closer to read the fine print, someone yelled from behind, "Stop! Don't cross the white line!" White line? Sure enough, between ourselves and the fence ten feet away was a white line. Later we found out that anyone who crosses the line is arrested (there was a military official sitting in a car next to the fence).

Kim Wahl, representing Agape (part of the Ground Zero community), said people began placing themselves in front of trains that carry nuclear weapons in 1973.

So we listened to the speakers and singers, participated in a "peace pledge" and left for home. We missed the vigil Sunday night and the act of civil disobedience scheduled for the next day. We decided we could not afford to miss school, going to jail and all.

"Did you get arrested?" is the question people have been asking me since I got back. No — but now I wear a button that says "Another Woman For Peace," and I learned a lot. Maybe being a peacenik isn't so bad.

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