

Baez Speaks

Nancy Philo

1969

“What we need is a Revolution!” (wild applause).

A rather flustered Joan Baez held up a hand for quiet...“I wish there was a way you could take back all the clapping you all just did,” she said embarrassedly.

“Now let me tell you what I mean by “revolution.”

By “revolution” she means change, and the basis of her approach to life and to her revolution (everyone’s got one) is that “the ethical is the practical.”

“We have,” she says, “arrived at a state of constant war.” She believes that anyone who thinks that men can survive the century without a total change in this society is idealistic and impractical.

After singing a few numbers accompanied by a singer named Jeff from the Resistance she touched on that schizophrenia instilled in us from birth that characterizes American life. We are taught to be loving and kind and nice on an individual level, but then we are faced with a nation that obscenely values “a piece of land more than human life.”

She defines the weapons of her revolution as the human heart and mind. The tools of war are dollars and bodies. Men must refuse to pay their taxes and must repossess their bodies in order to bring the war machine to a halt...

Joan Baez, along with her husband David Harris, was here to lend steam and glamour to the Motor City’s growing draft resistance movement.

No one expects Joan Baez, first and last the performer, to sit down and do draft counseling. Her job is to rally people and to give them support and generate enthusiasm. This she did for many by her presence and her singing. Over \$700 was collected for the Resistance.

Baez and Harris spoke in St. Joseph’s Episcopal Church at Woodward and Holbrook on March 11. The church was packed with an audience largely made up of high-school kids with draft-on-the-brain.

Also there were the old time movement oriented people around Detroit whose heads are roughly in the same place—and who meet only at the infrequent demonstrations. There may have been a few who just wanted to see Joanie with short hair.

Not much else has changed though, she still remains the nonviolent soldier.

The atmosphere was charged that day. Tom Sincavitch had taken sanctuary in the church after refusing to lend his body to the racial suppression referred to as riot training.

Dozens of people filtered through the crowd wearing “Hello. I’m Tom Sincavitch” name tags (more to express solidarity with Tom than to try to fool the FBI). The drama was heightened when Pastor Bob Morrison asked people to keep off the sanctuary area, saying, “We don’t know who are the feds and who are our own friends.” Later the next day Tom Sincavitch was arrested.

After Joan spoke she gave the stage to David Harris, one of the original founders of the Resistance movement, who is up for a three-year gig in federal prison for refusing induction into the service.

Joan and David spoke of the Resistance in intensely personal terms. Both feel the Resistance to represent a beginning to a new way of life. The beginning of “living one’s vision”—common terminology of both Abbie Hoffman, author of *Revolution for the Hell of it*, and the Harrises.

Hopefully, for many, the Resistance will be a vehicle toward understanding the evils of imperialism.

When men refuse to lend their bodies to an imperialist power which wages wars of repression around the world, they begin to repossess their lives. Fear has long been the prime mover in our society and this is obscene.

There can be no such thing as democracy says Harris, when the people are pawns to the controlling institutions.

“Orders can only be given out. The power lies in the refusal to obey orders.”

So spoke Joan Baez and David Harris who prefer to think of themselves as “Mr. and Mrs. Tom Sincavitch.”

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