

Our Readers Sound Off On Congressman's View

Editor, Press-Herald:

Congressman F. Edward Hebert's remarks at the Armed Forces Day luncheon suggesting the use of Alcatraz as a place of detention for those advocating resistance to the selective service system and the Vietnam conflict display an all too prevalent attitude of intolerance of dissent and a readiness to abandon freedom here in the United States for a fight for freedom elsewhere.

Representative Hebert's criticism of the Justice Department for failure to prosecute such dissenters as Martin Luther King and Stokely Carmichael should be viewed in a more fuller context. At a recent hearing of the House Armed Services Committee, Assistant U.S. Attorney General Fred Vinson testified that the statements of such dissenters were under the protection of the First Amendment to the US Constitution. Congressman Hebert replied, "Let's forget the First Amendment!" Attorney General Vinson reminded the Congressman, when he insisted that people demand action against dissenters, that "a great deal of the Constitution is intended to protect minorities and dissenters."

It is indeed unfortunate that such reminders must continually be required lest we forget the freedoms we are trying to protect and establish elsewhere. Congressman Hebert states that the US should not conduct its affairs in SE Asia on the basis of what "might" happen; apparently he has similar feeling with regard to Constitutional guarantees here, and is ready to dispense with free speech, regardless of what might happen to the free, open American society. His specific and gratuitous comparison of Martin Luther King to a known Communist leader was highly reminiscent of the McCarthy tactics of an era which we had hoped we behind us.

For a Congressman to compare dissenters to Communists, advocate their jailing, and criticize those in government who uphold the Constitutional right of dissent, may be front-page news, but it is hardly in the spirit of America's commitment to the Bill of Rights and the traditional freedom of the individual to speak as he chooses.

CARL B. PEARLSTON JR.
President, South Bay
ACLU Chapter.

Very Sobering

Editor, Press-Herald,
It is a very sobering thought that the man chosen to lead the Armed Forces Day parade in Torrance advocates imprisonment in Alcatraz for those who disagree with him.

Does he propose to send our sons to war to die for that philosophy? His idea of "freedom" is terribly limited. In fact, his suggestion sounds much like statements that came from Hitler's Germany.

If the growing militarism in our nation continues and if the criticism and intolerance of those who dissent from popular opinion continue—our country will lose those fundamental protections we talk about—"liberty and justice for all."

Alice Burger Hammond

Likes 'Letter'

Editor, Press-Herald:
As parents of an 18-month-old daughter, my wife and I enjoy very much reading your column 'A Letter to My Son,' by Tom Rische.

Mr. Rische's down-to-earth approach to the problems of teenagers seems based on good experience.

PHIL A. PENNINGTON
Deputy to Supervisor
Kenneth Hahn

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Choice Played

Editor, Press-Herald
The purpose of our Armed Forces Day program has been, as I understand it, to give the people of this community first hand knowledge of the military might that guarantees this country's freedom and security from aggression. World conditions such as they are, few would question either the propriety or value of publicly displaying our military strength.

However, it was extremely regrettable that the occasion was marred by the selection of a keynote speaker and parade leader whose opinions could not properly represent a military point of view and did not represent the point of view of our President.

The question of whether to escalate the war or not to negotiate, are political decisions, and as long as we live under a republican form of government these questions will be decided by our civilian leaders. It is correct and proper that Representative Hebert should express his political convictions both in and out of Congress, but it was most unfortunate that his controversial political views should have sounded the keynote for a most important non-political, non-partisan occasion.

The choice of Representative Hebert raises serious questions as to the motive or judgment of those responsible.

GARTH BELKNAP

Apathy Scored

Editor, Press-Herald:
Each May during the week designated as "National Police Week," Torrance police hold an open house and a ceremony honoring the injured and those who have died in the line of duty.

To me, the saddest part of this occasion is the lack of attendance by the citizens of Torrance.

Perhaps the people feel they are just doing a job that the taxpayers pay them to do. I hope not, for each time they pin on their badge to protect the citizenry, injury or death may be moments away. No salary could compensate for this, so they must be a dedicated group of men and women.

Any one of them could secure employment with much better pay in a number of fields if they so desired, yet they choose to remain within our police department. I wonder how many people have made any effort to show their appreciation in some small way. I know there are bumper stickers around town, "Support Your Local Police."

Perhaps if these citizens would take an hour from their busy schedules to attend the memorial ceremonies, it would be a great boost to the morale of our police department. They would feel that the city of Torrance really does "Support Its Local Police Department."

Sincerely,
EVA BISOU

A Letter... ...To My Son

By Tom Rische

High School Teacher and Youth Worker

Dear Bruce,

You gave us quite a thrill recently, when you started eating the contents of a vitamin bottle. Since you're only 19 months old, you didn't know any better, but your mother and I hope you'll learn.

I think anybody who takes any kind of drug without his doctor's prescription is stupid, because he's playing with his life—or his sanity. About 99.9 per cent of reputable medical authorities recommend strongly against playing around with such things as barbiturates, glue, marijuana, or LSD.

I'm not well-informed enough to be my own doctor or my own psychiatrist, and I'm rather certain that few teenagers and adults who play around with drugs are either.

Teenagers say, "Marijuana isn't any worse than drinking. Why not?" I think it is worse than drinking: (1) There is plenty of evidence as to what drinking does to the human body; very little is known about marijuana and its long-range effects; and (2) Most people don't drink to get drunk; marijuana users smoke to get high.

People say, "Try LSD and find your hang-ups." I'd say that if you've got those kind of problems, see a psychiatrist. Even less is known about the effects of LSD, but it is certain that some users are in mental institutions as a result. Instant psychoanalysis seldom works.

Many of my students say they've had chances to take either LSD or marijuana. South Bay newspapers recently have carried stories about the problems and of the efforts of parents to discourage dope use. (Although the kids say that a few parents allow it in their home—"I'd rather you'd do it here than out in public.")

I'm not willing to play games with my health or sanity.

Leaving Russian roulette to the Russians,
Your dad

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