

Arts & Entertainment

Nuclear protest film: 'We are not saved at all'

By Steve Abariotes

"We are saved today by freeing our spirit from resignation to the existing disorder."

Ignazio Silone

Well, not quite. For when Silone's proverb is cast against "In The King of Prussia," Emile de Antonio's latest film about nuclear protest and civil disobedience, we find, quite uncomfortably, that we are not saved at all.

"In the King of Prussia" is a docu-drama and an admittedly biased film written and directed by de Antonio, who appeared on campus last semester to discuss his work. "Point of Order," "Millhouse: A White Comedy" and "In The Year Of The Pig" are the films that were shown here.

Review

"In The King Of Prussia" follows the crusade of eight peace activists, dubbed the Plowshares Eight, (three clergymen and a sister among them), into a General Electric re-entry systems factory in King of Prussia, Pa. Immediately upon entering the plant, they subdued the man in charge of security. Then with concealed hammers, they battered nosecone housings being produced for first-strike nuclear weapons and sprinkled them with vials of their own blood. Afterward, they assumed a more traditional form of religious service, singing hymns and praying, while they wait for the police to arrive.

The film is comprised of documentary protest footage and a dramatic re-enactment of the courtroom proceedings which followed.

The courtroom scenes feature Martin Sheen as the rather abusive judge, the Plowshares Eight as themselves and seventy New York actors filling roles as lawyers, judges, police, jurors and GE employees. Sheen, sympathetic to the spirit of the film, agreed to perform

The GE employees are depicted as unimaginative lackeys; they refer repeatedly to the hilarious-looking cone-shaped missile housings that are produced for the trial as "GE property," still swearing to company security. This brings up an interesting question. Does the company oath that an employee takes in his work supersede the sacred oath of the courtroom? In this case it did.

De Antonio, known for his juxtapositional, conflict-creating crosscutting, does not need to apply his technique here. The good and the evil confront each other in the same room at the same moment. Much of the film is rough and sloppy because it was filmed with a hand-held camera, yet the visual movement of the first half of



Emile de Antonio directing Martin Sheen on the set of "In the King of Prussia."

the film advances with a kind of scrappy, heavy momentum.

The octet, which included the Rev. Daniel Berrigan, 61, of the Society of Jesus and his ex-priest brother Philip, 58, took its name from a biblical prophet's words: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares." Indeed, the film has a very spiritual feeling about it that the camera completely respects, along with a flavor of the 1960s draft card burnings, in which the Berrigan brothers also participated.

The Plowshares Eight argued that the burglary of the GE nuclear warhead nosecones was an act that was done in the name of mankind, regardless of the law, because of the intended use of the warheads. They were found guilty on all counts.

The Rev. Berrigan gives an amazing, dramatic performance in his own defense, completely spontaneous and without a script.

The King of Prussia area is, according to a long-time resident, probably one of the most conservative areas on the East Coast. As such, the area is still devoted to the conservative ideal that property takes precedent over people.

The music, a somber ballad, is by Jackson Browne. There is also a special cameo appearance by New York's premiere graffiti artist, "Futura 2000," who jumps over a brick wall and spray paints the title of the movie on it.

"In The King Of Prussia" is at the Sheldon Film Theatre tonight at 7 and 9, Saturday and Sunday at 3 p.m.

Defrosting is chilling event, as ice-berg flows from fridge

Trudy was defrosting her refrigerator/freezer Sunday afternoon.

She knew it was time. The plants along the window sill drooped a little more each

T. Marni Vos

time the refrigerator door opened and darkness rose to the ceiling in small clouds.

A good-size glacier had formed below the ice service tray and Trudy was removing the moldy baking soda box from the second shelf when the large mass of ice dropped and crashed through the first and second shelves of the old Frigidaire.

Part of the tiny Himalayas formation caught Trudy's arm and broke it in three places. Trudy dropped the soda box and it slid across the floor with bits and pieces of iceberg.

A steak Trudy couldn't remember eating but wasn't able to find 16 weeks ago bobbed towards the kitchen door along with the rest of Siberia.

A small snow-capped mountain surrounded by tiny islands floated on top

of the vegetable drawer.

An oddly formed conglomeration of tomatoes, cauliflower, fuzz and green penicillin screamed from inside the vegetable bin. Lassie, the chihuahua, growled, then retreated to his rug under the dining room table.

Trudy poured boiling water into the freezer and began shoveling the floor into the sink. She tried to remember if Linda Beermann or Dale Munson had mentioned blizzard conditions on the noon news.

After sprinkling salt across the floor, Trudy set her blow dryer at 250 and placed it in the freezer.

She sat on the kitchen counter eating half a bowl of Jell-O, a hard boiled Easter egg, a square of hard cheese, some jam, a cube of restaurant butter and some frozen Halloween candy.

The freezer dried. Trudy wiped down the fridge walls, cleaned the vegetable bin and shined the handle. She returned the ketchup and mustard to their home in the door and filled the ice trays. The popcorn sat on the second shelf and vitamins went next to it. Trudy looked at her clean Frigidaire and thought that it was, perhaps, a good time to go grocery shopping . . .

"Let's see, I'll need some tomatoes. Cauliflower sounds good . . ."

