

Editorial

No. 1 Oppressor Still the U.S.S.R.

Those who may think that President Carter's singling out of the U.S.S.R. as abusive of human rights is a matter of politics and/or uncalled for in the light of the so-called detente will be edified to know what a special commission on human rights says about the Soviet Union

The U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, established to monitor adherence to the Helsinki accords on human rights, has issued a two-volume report to Congress which among other things states that "it is in the Soviet Union that the devout believer encounters the most severe opposition to his religious liberty"

It seems that in the just concern for the violation of rights in Third World countries and where volatile struggles for power lead to repressive measures that we tend to forget that no country surpasses the U.S.S.R. when it comes to oppression

"The situation of believers in most East European states is characterized by discrimination but not by active repression (as in the Soviet Union) Churchgoers there often find their way barred to some higher education and certain professions," the report notes

"Ukrainian Catholics suffer a special hardship - the abolition of the Church that gave them a historical as well as ethnic identity. Soviet Jews seeking the linguistic, religious and cultural community Jews are able to enjoy in other nations, find the path they wish to follow closed by a variety of official and historical obstacles," the report states.

In Czechoslovakia, religious freedom "is systematically curbed persons who manifest their religious faith either by word or action lose their jobs or suffer other repressions"

Romania and East Germany also are cited as violating basic religious rights but apparently Moscow still outdistances the field when it comes to repressive government

Try It!

Maybe he thinks it will be cause for thanksgiving but in any case the rector of St. Mary's Church in Lake Orion, Mich., plans to preach the world's shortest sermon on Nov. 20, the Sunday before turkey day

Father John H. Albrecht says that "a short sermon is much more difficult to write than a long one," as we who sit in the pews probably would attest. "How do you condense and crystalize the Christian gospel into one word or phrase?" he asks

How indeed! But nonetheless, Father Albrecht has already received the following one-word suggestions: "Love" (wouldn't you have guessed it), "Loyalty," "Charity," "Mankind," "Believe," and "Joy!"

We hope that Father Albrecht will not opt for a one-word sermon when a homily with a few more words may be thousands of times more effective.

We invite anyone with such a short sermon in mind to send it to the Courier-Journal and we will send the suggestions on to Father Albrecht. We also hope to report back to our readers his final choice.

At first we thought we would establish a special department for this project, perhaps called the Soul of Brevity, or should that be the Brevity of Soul? But such bureaucracy would be inimical to the nature of the undertaking. So simply send your short-short homilies to our Opinion Page. And hold your breath, the idea may catch on.

Time, too, is short. So please do it now

Opinion

Neighborhood Involvement

Editor: I would like to comment on Mr. James M. Keefe's response on July 27 to my letter of July 13. In it he asked me to consider the ramifications of the closings of schools like St. Augustine's or Our Lady of Good Counsel, and the subsequent mass exodus to the suburbs. His conclusion was, "Bingo is a necessary evil and it requires workers."

I have always admitted the importance of the parochial school, and the equal importance of the church in stabilizing a city neighborhood. Let us look at a few areas that had no effective neighborhood groups. I will identify these areas by parishes - St. Michael's, Immaculate Conception, St. Peter and Paul's and St. Lucy's. I believe they all had bingo, and some still have it, but their schools are closed.

Twelve years ago the churches in the 19th Ward joined together to form the 19th Ward Community Association, knowing the importance of maintaining the neighborhood if the churches were to survive. The battle is not won and is still being fought. Neighborhoods need workers just as bingo needs workers. In the neighborhood we have essential partnerships. We need all the resources we can get. We need FISH, the Community Association, the churches, Scouts, parish councils, Little League, the Y, PTA, parochial schools and family.

In Catholic doctrine we have an excellent example of what we need in the concept of the Mystical Body of Christ. Each person has a role to play. Each person uses his talents in diverse ways. All of us at times forget about the Mystical Body of Christ. We feel sorry for ourselves and feel our project to be the most important. We want everyone who receives benefits to contribute, forgetting what we have received from others without contributing.

Praise should go to men like Msgr. Duffy, former pastor of St. Augustine's, and other area clergymen who understood the concept of the Mystical Body, and encouraged neighborhood involvement as part of the mission and vision of the church. I hope we do not lose sight of this mission and vision today

R. Michael Fitzpatrick
229 Warwick Ave.
Rochester, N.Y. 14611

COURIER-JOURNAL

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan
President

Anthony J. Costello
Publisher &
General Manager

Carmen J. Viglucci
Editor

Rev. Louis J. Hohman
Episcopal Advisor

Vol. 92 No. 21 September 21, 1977

Published weekly by the Rochester Catholic Press Association. Subscription rates: Single copy 20¢; 1 year subscription in U.S. \$7.50; Canada and Foreign \$12.00. Offices: Richard Building, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604 (716) 454-7050. Second Class Postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.

Courier-Journal

911 Distinction Urged

Editor: The 16th District of the State Volunteer Ambulance and First Aid Association is fervent in its belief that a viable 911 emergency program in Monroe County can be effective only when such a program specifically provides distinctions between the three units of emergency services the program would involve - police, ambulance and fire.

According to a position paper released May 24, 1977, by the Monroe-Livingston Regional Emergency Health Services Council, approximately 100,000 calls per year are made for emergency medical services in Monroe County, a number of calls second only to requests for police services.

The 16th District urges that any proposal for a 911 center must include a separate and distinct module for receipt and transmission of calls for ambulance services. Calls must be transmitted by dispatchers trained and knowledgeable of emergency medical services in Monroe County and must be transmitted to the appropriate volunteer or fire department ambulance agency in a manner which the agency requests.

There is no doubt this goal may be difficult to achieve, especially with eight volunteer agencies, 14 fire departments, and three proprietary companies serving Monroe County residents. Yet the goal is not beyond reach. Moreover, it must be achieved if the people's requests for ambulance service are to be properly received and transmitted by a 911 center.

The City of Rochester must realize the necessity for a separate and distinct emergency medical services module in any 911 proposal. The 16th District, which represents 18 volunteer and fire department ambulance services in the Greater Rochester area, demands it.

This position of the 16th District was formally adopted by the district's membership on Aug. 25, 1977.

Richard Myrick, Chairman
16th District,
NYSVA & FAA

ERA Matter Of Rights

Editor: Re Mrs. Jeanne Sweeney's letter in the Aug. 31 issue of the Courier-Journal, regarding a statement made by Sister Jane Marie Lueke at the 1977 NAWR convention that "there is no conflict in being against abortion and for the Equal Rights Amendment." This letter also voiced concern about a "totalitarian view regarding ERA, abortion and homosexuality."

I would like to offer the following clarification. Appended to the Senate ERA report, as is customary on all major legislation, is a section for the views of members of Congress who opposed the Equal Rights Amendment. The Minority Views of Mr. Ervin (Sen. Sam Ervin of North Carolina, an opponent of ERA) has been a major source of material for those who oppose the amendment's ratification. Ervin's views are extensively quoted by many opponents and provide ideas for the other major source of opposition material, the Phyllis Schlafly Report. This report, published once a month by the best-known ratification opponent, deals with various aspects of ERA she thinks will harm women. Phyllis Schlafly has



"LOOK AT IT THIS WAY, CHARLIE" IT GAVE US A GREAT TOOL FOR WORKING CROSSWORD PUZZLES!"

charged that the ERA will "constitutionalize" the Supreme Court's decisions on abortion. Her December 1974 newsletter is dedicated to this proposition, but she doesn't present one legal argument to back up her pronouncement. The reason is clear - there aren't any.

The Supreme Court's abortion decisions (Roe vs. Wade, 410 U.S. 133, 1973) and Doe vs. Bolton, 410 U.S. 179, 1973) are based exclusively on the privacy principle derived from the due process clause of the 14th Amendment. The right of privacy was first recognized by the Supreme Court in Griswold vs. Connecticut (381 U.S. 479, 1965). In the Griswold case "the court held that a couple's right of privacy in the marital relationship prevented the State of Connecticut from imposing laws concerning their use of contraceptive devices."

The Equal Rights Amendment has nothing to do with privacy or the Due Process Clause, rather it is concerned with equal protection of the laws. It provides simply that government may not, in its laws, or in its official actions discriminate on the basis of sex. Since abortion, by its very nature, can be performed only on women, sex discrimination in this area is irrelevant. The proposed 27th Amendment, if ratified, therefore, would have no applicability whatsoever to the question of abortion.

Some ERA opponents have argued that the amendment will mean legislation of homosexual marriage. This argument stems from a misunderstanding of the word "sex" in the amendment. While ERA refers to gender discrimination, it does not address sexual behavior. Senate debate clearly states that the amendment would not interfere with a state prohibiting marriage between two people of the same sex, so long as rules applying to men also apply to women. In Washington State, which has a state ERA, the Supreme Court held that the state amendment did not invalidate Washington's law prohibiting homosexual marriage (Singer vs. Hara, 11 Wash. App. 542 Pd 1187, 1974).

The NAWR does champion the cause of equal rights for all, and because of a firm commitment to this ideal, supports the ERA.

Sister Marlene J. Vigna, RSM
NAWR Delegate
Diocesan Sisters Council
St. John the Evangelist
549 Humboldt St.
Rochester, N.Y. 14610

No Benefit For Panamanians

Editor: I must respond to your outrageous editorial asking your readers to back the current Panama Canal treaty.

The main reason I oppose the new Panama Canal treaty is that it would hand the canal to a Marxist dictatorship.

That is why it is so hard to understand Archbishop Marcos G. McGrath of Panama when he says that the new treaty will benefit the Panamanians.

The only Panamanians that will benefit from the new treaty will be those who are running Panama

In most dictatorships and especially Marxist dictatorships the people rarely benefit from an economic windfall

Therefore it is unbelievable that any Catholic could support such an anti-religious regime.

The new Panama Canal treaty will only bring economic gain to a government that routinely violates the rights of its citizens. It should be opposed by all those voicing concern for human rights

Robert Bart
P.O. Box 594
Ithaca, N.Y. 14850

Why Not Latin Also?

Editor: With regard to Mrs. Margaret Thompson's letter of Aug. 31, 1977 I ditto her good letter, and ask also "why not a Latin Mass, too?"

I do like many of the changes in our church and we were due for some changes, but not so many and so drastically.

There are feelings among many of the "faithful" that much has been crammed down their throats, and they can take it or leave it. Many are leaving it - so many parishes well know!

Amelia Longo
134 Hawthorne Place
Ithaca, N.Y. 14850

Letters intended for publication must be addressed to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

They should be no longer than 1 1/2 pages, typed double-spaced, with names and addresses. The paper reserves the right to edit all letters.