

Editorials

Summer Shorts

In a recent New York Times, Flora Lewis repeated an oft-written idea that international sports events are a valid and civilized way of settling disputes between or among rivaling countries.

This view is often expressed with regard to Olympic competition but columnist Lewis this time applies the idea to the World Cup of soccer. She noted that all the tension and enmity of international conflicts were present but that "no one got blown up."

True, but that doesn't always apply to inter-country sports competition. Lest we forget the Munich Olympics.

And there were many bitter sidelights even to the just ended World Cup, which was peaceful in comparison to some soccer competition when fans storm the field and each other. For instance, the Argentinian team was taunted with chants of "How does it feel to lose a war?"

Some English fans were booted because of tastelessness, which must have been particularly gross since soccer fans are among the most violent of any sport.

It is unlikely that the impromptu collusion between the West German and Austrian teams on the field to keep Algeria out of the second round will be soon forgotten. Even German newspapers were extremely caustic in their criticism of the maneuver which eliminated longshot Algeria, which had shocked the world by defeating behemoth West Germany in the first round.

And though Italy in a sense avenged this wrong by its victory over the West Germans, it seems likely that these two neighbors will be less than friendly over the next four years.

And as to no one being killed, a few did die of heart attacks and suicides in Brazil when that highly favored team was sent home in defeat.

Too often, the human race, belligerent lot that it is, literally does turn its games into wars.

The irony of Israel's intrusion into Lebanon is that it has more effectively focused the world's attention on the plight of the homeless Palestinian refugees than all of Yassir Arafat's terrorist activities.

The shadow of Arafat's violence has long clouded the legitimate demand of the Palestinians for a homeland. Now that he is cornered in check and while

most of the rest of the world is dismayed by Israel's counter-violence, the reality of the homeless Palestinians has taken a well-needed stage-front.

The Church probably couldn't do better in its choice to succeed Cardinal Cody of Chicago.

Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin has all the qualities of leadership necessary to refresh that sore giant of Catholicism. In addition to being an effective and respected leader, he possesses the ability to listen to his flock and take what he hears seriously.

Expect no great dramatic flair from Archbishop Bernardin. He is calm, deliberate and even self-effacing. These could well be the very qualities the Vatican were seeking in the man it sought for the beleaguered faithful of Chicago.

A Gift?

Perhaps Phyllis Schlafly was misquoted in the New York Times which reported her saying: "The atomic bomb is a marvelous gift that was given to our country by a wise God."

If so, why did He give it to Russia, too?

and Opinions

Cracking Down On 'Kiddie Porn'

Editor:

The death rattle of the child pornography industry echoed throughout the land on July 2 when Justice Byron White announced the unanimous judgment of the Supreme Court in New York vs. Ferber. Paul Ira Ferber, convicted of selling two grotesque films involving children 12 years of age and under, should begin serving his 45-day jail sentence.

In a stunning reversal, the Supreme Court threw out last year's decision by the New York Court of Appeals which had overturned New York's ban on child pornography on assumed First Amendment grounds. New York vs. Ferber is a landmark decision not only for its contribution to our understanding of "freedom of speech" but also for its wide-awake awareness of the severe harm "kiddie porn" merchants inflict on the children they use. All too often the welfare of these children has been forgotten in theoretical discussion of the sex industry and its perceived protection under the First Amendment.

At Covenant House — the Times Square crisis shelter for runaway and homeless youth that I started five years ago — we have never been able to forget sexually exploited kids. Well over half of the 200 or more kids we shelter each

night have traded sexual favors for money, food, or a place to sleep, just to survive on the streets. Others have been forced to make pornographic movies. On behalf of these children, we became involved in the Ferber case as a "friend of the court," urging the justices to uphold New York law against the selling of "kiddie porn" — whether or not the material in question can be deemed legally "obscene."

What the Supreme Court ultimately saw, which the Court of Appeals did not, was that the issue of obscenity was irrelevant in light of "a government objective of surpassing importance (prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of children)." The legal obscenity standard fails to take cognizance of the harm inflicted on child performers. As the court noted, the making of a "kiddie porn" movie is nothing short of sexual abuse, with the resulting film being a "permanent record of a child's participation," which can haunt the child for the rest of his or her life. Brooke Shields' efforts to suppress lewd photographs taken, with her mother's consent, when she was 10 years old, are a classic example of what that "permanent record" can mean to the victim.

The horrors of the child pornography industry thus fully justified the Supreme Court's decision recognizing and classifying "kiddie porn"

as outside the protection of the First Amendment. Manhattan District Attorney, Robert M. Morgenthau, and Assistant District Attorney, Robert M. Pitler, who argued the case before the Supreme Court, deserve the highest accolades. It is now up to the U.S. Congress to amend the federal statute to eliminate the onerous obscenity standard from its "kiddie porn" law. New York's 30 sister states, which do not have statutes similar to ours, should also consider amending their respective statutes to the full extent permitted by the Supreme Court's decision. As the New York experience proves, the market for child pornography can be crushed with strong enough laws and law enforcement.

Even more important, though, is a growing national recognition that sexual exploitation of children — through prostitution and sexual abuse far more than pornography — is a daily fact of life in every part of this country. The one million children who run away from home each year, along with many others who are simply pushed out by their parents, have few options for survival. The most accessible is, all too often, participation in some aspect of commerce in sex, although the overcrowding of adolescent prisons and detention centers is testimony to the fact that other, equally damaging alternatives are available.

The saving of America's troubled children is a goal as important as the protection of free speech, as the health of our economy, and as the strength of our national defense. For as our highest court has recognized, the loss of these children is ultimately the loss of our country's future.

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Who Gets Hurt By Budget Cuts?

Editor:

Last year Congress passed severe cuts in human needs programs. The Reagan Administration proposes still deeper cuts for fiscal year 1983.

Food stamps were cut by more than \$2 billion last year. The administration wants a further cut of \$2.3 billion for '83. Low income working families, the elderly and disabled will be hardest hit.

Child nutrition programs and Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) face even more drastic reductions, and incorporation into block grants. Pregnant women, unborn and newly-born babies and small children will take the brunt.

Fiscal year '82 cuts in federal housing brought rent raises for about three million low income families. Proposals for '83 go further. The working poor are hit again.

Federally-funded public service jobs have been eliminated. Three hundred thousand have been thrown out of work and deprived of the opportunity to learn a trade. The administration proposes a 40 percent cut in programs to train unskilled, unemployed persons. Most of these people are poor and of the minorities. Their chance to pull themselves out of the cycle of abject poverty has been taken away. No matter how hard they try, they cannot break into the job market until they have gained at least minimal skills.

These are just a few examples. The list goes on and on.

The Reagan promises that the poor and needy would not be made to suffer have gone by the boards. The "safety net" has gaping holes in it and the benefits of Reaganomics have failed to "trickle down."

In fact, the Reagan Administration proposes to have the federal government shuck its responsibilities to hungry children, the poor, the elderly and the disabled. It is trying to wipe out the social advances we have made over the past 50 years. It will succeed unless we stop it. It has come a long way already.

What can one do? Write letters to senators and congressmen today and keep on writing until Congress adjourns in October. Pass the word. Bring it up in church. Ask your pastor to preach about it. Wringing hands and empty prayer will not help.

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"SPIRITUAL JOY IN EVERYDAY THINGS DOESN'T HAVE TO INCLUDE THE DOG, SWEETHEART."

Xavier Society Offers Help

Editor:

With the help of many devoted volunteers the Xavier Society, the National Catholic Press and Library for the Blind makes available to all visually impaired persons throughout the U.S. several periodicals on tape, in braille and in large print.

Tape magazines are provided on cassette only, and are mailed directly to readers often before the date of the regular publication. The taping of magazines for the blind and partially sighted provides them with current articles in a convenient and easy-to-read form. At this time the society offers two weekly magazines on cassette, Our Sunday Visitor and America, and four monthly publications, Catholic Digest, Liguorian, Sign, and the society's own magazine, the Catholic Review Plus.

Totally blind persons who prefer to do their own reading are provided with a monthly publication in braille. This magazine, entitled The Catholic Review, is edited by the society and consists of a variety of current articles of religious and non-religious topics. In addition, the society

publishes a current braille newsletter for the doubly handicapped deaf and blind person. This publication is provided to keep the non-hearing blind person aware of events, since he has to rely solely on braille for his reading.

For the partially sighted person who requires print larger than ordinary, the society offers a monthly Large Print Catholic Review. This publication varies somewhat from the braille and tape editions.

In addition, the society has a great variety of inspirational and devotional books in all three forms. Further information is available by writing to the society.

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Catholic Literature

Editor:

Readers may like to mail their used Catholic pamphlets and magazines directly to the foreign missions.

If those who wish to do so will please send me self-addressed envelopes, I will give them the addresses of missionary priests and nuns who need Catholic literature.

Mary Conway
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Cork, Ireland

Guidelines

The Courier-Journal welcomes your opinions. Letters must bear the writer's signature, full address and telephone number. They should be sent to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 114 S. Union S., Rochester, N.Y. 14607.

Opinions should be brief, typed, double-spaced, no longer than 1 1/2 pages.

We routinely condense letters, edit offensive words and libelous statements, and reserve the right to reject letters. Generally speaking, however, only limited grammatical corrections will be made and the letters will reflect the writer's own style.

Because submitted opinions exceed the space for letters, we publish only original letters addressed to us. We will not use poetry, open letters, or copies of letters sent elsewhere. To ensure diversity, we limit each writer to one letter per month.