

Editorials

That Man Again

Even amid the enormously urgent problems in Poland and the Middle East, Pope John Paul II continues to reiterate his opposition to nuclear armament.

History may well show that this pontiff is as much a student of international affairs as any previous pope, dating back to Peter, whose own life was molded by those who played the politics of empire-building.

John Paul is unafraid to speak out on international discord, whether in Latin America, Europe, Asia or the Far East. The Holy Father also has no qualms about taking an unpopular stance in the face of popular trends.

more persistently or frequently than in the matter of nuclear disarmament.

Most recently, he told a seminar of scientists in Italy that nuclear dissuasion "cannot be considered a final goal or an appropriate and secure means for safeguarding international peace."

"The balance of nuclear weapons is a balance of terror," he said. "It has already used up too many of mankind's resources for death-dealing works and instruments. And it is continuing to absorb immense intellectual and physical energies, directing scientific research away from the promotion of the most authentic human values and toward the production of destructive devices."

Of course, John Paul has made similar statements in the past. The fact that he would concentrate on this theme to a seminar of scientists, when there are so many other pertinent topics, shows the extent to which he is concerned about the arms buildup.

And, of course, his words continue to fall on deaf ears as far as nations which only feel secure strapped in nuclear gunbelts. That, sadly, may be expected. What

is even more disheartening is that so many Catholics whose mission is to bring the Christian message of love to the world, also will not hear the Holy Father on this dire problem.

Test-Tube Babies

Vatican Radio recently made the Holy See's position on test-tube babies very clear.

The Sept. 2 broadcast stated: "From both the moral and social point of view, it is unacceptable that human embryos are taken from their natural place to become frozen or destroyed."

"The desire to have children is deeply human and the efforts to find scientific means to satisfy this desire are admirable," the radio said, "but ... test-tube fertilization is unacceptable."

The radio broadcast supported the position of the Roman Catholic bishops of Australia who recently condemned the practice.

and Opinions

Vote Signup Deadline Near

Editor:

The deadline for voters to register by mail for this year's general election is Oct. 4.

We are encouraging all county residents to register so that they may help choose a governor. May we count on your assistance?

V. James Chiavari, Commissioner of Elections; W. Michael Losinger, Commissioner of Elections

No Political Endorsements

The Courier-Journal does not print letters of political endorsement.

Pax Christi Criticized

Editor:

As I watched television coverage of Polish police goons truncheoning elderly citizens in a Warsaw square recently, my mind flashed back to some of the many Polish and East German refugees I was privileged to meet and know in West Germany in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

How ironic, then, it was for me to read in the most recent issue of Commonweal a critical review of the American bishops' draft of a pastoral dealing with nuclear warfare. The review's author was Gordon C. Zahn, who has in previous writings castigated American bishops for not condoning his World War II pacifism and German bishops for their alleged inaction during the Third Reich.

Auschwitz — an Auschwitz, mind you, that he refused to help liberate.

For the past several years Professor Zahn has worked diligently to promote Pax Christi, an international Catholic pacifist organization currently being given much assistance and publicity by the Division of Social Ministry's Department of Peace and Justice. To be sure, the Division of Social Ministry's fall kickoff will feature a Dr. David O'Brien, whose credits include Pax Christi moderator at Holy Cross College, fellow of the New England Catholic Peace Fellowship and member of the Board of Directors of that scholarly, erudite and eminently objective publication, The National Catholic Reporter. Touted as a distinguished Catholic scholar, Dr. O'Brien is clearly the "Tweedle-Dee" to Pax Christi's preeminent "Tweedle-Dum," Professor Zahn. Some would judge distinguished Catholic scholarship and National Catholic Reporter affiliation to be mutually exclusive terms.

What is particularly distressing in all of this is not only the great disservice being done to the millions and millions suffering under the yoke of atheistic communism by Pax Christi internationally, but also the failure of the Department of Peace and Justice to recognize and stand up to the fact that their educational efforts on the subject of warfare, nuclear or conventional, are supposed to be balanced and objective. The reality is that dioceses see only efforts in one direction: Education which advocates or encourages young Americans to draft registration evasion and disrespect for lawful authority is repugnant to the overwhelming majority of dioceses. It also betrays an unbelievably unprofessional and arrogant attitude. That, however, is sadly the history of this diocesan department dating back to its days as the Office of Human Development.

It is the responsibility of any diocesan entity dealing with problematical and complex issues to provide a balanced, objective treatment of such issues. Is it unfair to ask the Department of Peace and Justice to fulfill this responsibility?

William F. Schmitz, 174 Cedargrove Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14617

A Case For Pacifism

Editor:

Mr. Bart's latest letter (Aug. 18) cited the Cambodian tragedy as a product of misguided American pacifism. While there was certainly an important role played in Cambodia by the American government, it defies credibility to label it pacifistic.

Was the destruction of sizable sections of Cambodian countryside by American B52 carpet-bombing motivated by our government's concern for a peaceful Cambodia, or as an extension of our involvement in the Vietnam War?

The Communist opposition movement in Cambodia was marginal until after an American-supported coup replaced the traditional monarchy with the military dictatorship of Lon Nol. What evidence does Mr. Bart have that American support for that regime was motivated by anything other than U.S. military and political strategy?

And when Pol Pot assumed power, feeding on the nationalism fostered by foreign intervention, was our government's opposition bred by concern for real peace, or by its implications for regional politics? The fact that the U.S. government now has come full circle to support Pol Pot's claim to power there — after the incredible destruction he inflicted on his own people — shows that our government's interests are not pacifist.

The Cambodians have been victims of international politics, modern warfare and savage repression. If there is a lesson about pacifism in all that, it is how terrible the consequences where it is absent.

Michael J. DeMott, 851 Atlantic Ave., Rochester, N.Y. 14609

Diocesan Radio Suggestion

Editor:

"You have the situations reversed." The good priest who had suffered behind the Iron Curtain said to me, "The Church of Silence is not in communist countries. The silent Church is in the free world." I realized then that it was not more than twice in 20 years that I remembered prayers offered for these most deprived Christians.

I receive a remarkable publication, "Chronicles of the Catholic Church in Lithuania," the samizdat (underground) "Lietuvos Kataliku Baznycios Kronika." Since 1972 it has been documenting the persecution of religion and denial of human rights in Soviet-occupied Lithuania. This publication is the work of dedicated Catholics who risk their lives to bring their story to the Church of Silence in the Free World. It is heart-breaking!

A current story datelined Klapieda, Lithuania, appearing in a Catholic publication detailing the Soviet confiscation of a Lithuanian Catholic church, has impelled me to write this letter. Mary, Queen of Peace Church in Klapieda, was the only Catholic church allowed to be built in Lithuania since World War II. It was funded by three million rubles contributed by the impoverished Catholics of this small, brave country. The church was completed by volunteer labor after the Soviet government had granted building permission. Just before it was to be consecrated, the authorities sealed the church doors and later converted it into a concert hall.

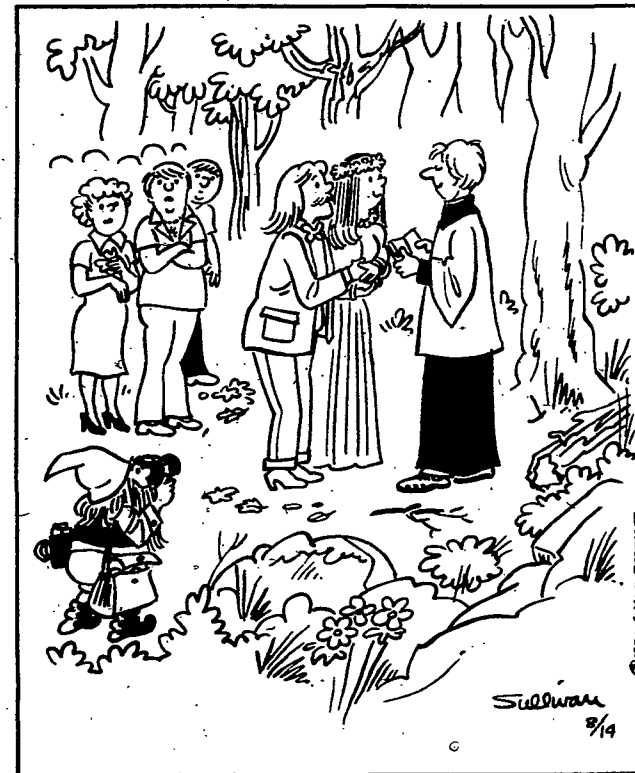
This story points up the obligation we have to at least give some recognition to this cause. The Lithuanian community in Rochester, as well as the Ukrainian, have weekly broadcasts. Their staffs are highly professional. Would it not be an opportunity for great public service if the diocesan radio program "Listen and Proclaim" would invite some of the fine media personalities of the Lithuanian community to appear on their program?

Gertrude Newberry, 160 Azalea Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14620

Teenager Heartens Priest

Courier-Journal readers, especially teenagers, may enjoy a letter written in early September by Father Benedict Ehmann to a teenage girl who had written a letter to the Democrat and Chronicle protesting the 3-star rating Jack Garner gave the movie "Fast Times at Ridgeway High." She rated it "far below average." Father Ehmann's letter:

Dear K: Thank you for your fine



"WHERE DID THEY FIND THE PHOTOGRAPHER?"

little letter in the D&C last Friday. Thank God, there are still young people like you who have their head on straight and their heart in the right place. It was reassuring to have you tell that you don't know any teenagers as wild and loose as those in that movie. May your tribe increase!

I'm a Catholic priest, somewhat along in years. When I hear about the wacky books, magazines, records, TV shows aimed at teenage consumers, and apparently making a fat bundle out of it, the prospect can look pretty dark and grim, I tell you. But then, along comes word of persons like you, and it's like lights going on to give us hope. It shows there are still lots of people your age who are not pushovers in our sleazy, brash world of today.

God keep you clear-eyed, strong and full of courage in it!

Father Benedict Ehmann, 7 Austin St., Rochester, N.Y. 14606

Editorial Questioned

Editor:

I would like to respond to the editorial under the heading, "Another Murder!"

I really don't have a problem either pro or con on the death penalty if it is stated as such. However, to draw the analogy that the execution of F. Coppola should have prevented the Princeton

freshman basketball player from being shot or prevent further murders in our country is a little beyond my scope of comprehension.

James Clifford, 257 W. Ivy St., East Rochester, N.Y. 14445

Editor's Note: The editorial, written satirically, tried to make the point that despite widely publicized executions, murders will be continued to be committed, thus weakening the argument of those who claim that such executions are a deterrent to death penalty offenses.

Submissive Only to God

Editor:

Last Wednesday morning, I happened to be listening to WSWG, a radio station here in Rochester. At the time, Jerry Falwell was speaking about "godly" women. It seems that he believes that a godly woman has to be submissive. I deeply resent this implication. I love God very much and I live what I feel is a good life. I am not a member of any radical women's liberation movement. However, I am far from being submissive. I will stand up for my beliefs. After all, how can we, as Christians, say that we follow Jesus' example if we are submissive? The only being to which humans should be submissive is our Holy Father in heaven.

Dawn Hawkes, 135 Versailles Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14621