Editorial

A Peculiar Faith

National Catholic News Service reported last week on the Supreme Court's ruling against Tony Alamo, head of the Tony and Susan Alamo Christian Foundation. Alamo had claimed First Amendment protection from federal minimum-wage and record-keeping requirements. NC News reported: "The foundation, which has distributed anti-Vatican pamphlets, defines itself as a religious organization, but also owns and operates a number of businesses."

Alamo based his argument on freedom of religion, claiming that the government could not require him to pay minimum wages to the foundation's "volunteers." The volunteers, he said, are "pastors" whose activity is solely

But the court rejected this argument, finding instead that the foundation's many commercial enterprises — a construction company, gas station, restaurant, etc. -- qualify it as a business subject to federal law.

Good for the court. Although the activity of Alamo and his "volunteers" cannot be taken seriously by well-informed and rational persons, it would be a mockery for the court to grant him exemption from legal requirements on the basis of freedom of religion — a principle he certainly does not uphold. Moreover, if the anti-Catholic posters are any indication of the volunteers' "pastoral" activity, the "Christianity" claimed in the foundation's name is certainly tainted with an unlikely theology.

The message of nearly all religions, in both East and West, has been peace, love, and concern for one's fellow man. The message contained by the anti-Vatican posters — credit for which Alamo neither claims nor convincingly denies — is that of hate and what seems like an unholy vengeance.

Some posters proclaim that the swastika is a Jesuit symbol, while others warn that the Vatican's goal is to rule the world and stamp out all other religions. They claim that the Vatican owns nearly all of the major news media and controls the CIA, FBI, IRS and other U.S. government agencies.

Utter nonsense, yes! But, despite his supposed devotion to freedom of religion, one cannot help but wonder: If he had the power and the opportunity, what would Alamo do to the Vatican? Would he eventually seek to stamp out the Catholic Church and all of the good it does in the world? And in the short run, what do the those who distribute the posters hope

So much for freedom of religion.

and Opinions

'War Horror' Is Communist Goal

Before You "Close the Book" (Editorial, April 17), I would like to say that I do not agree with (Carl) Sagan when he says "There is no doctrine, no religion or politics or anything else that is worth the extinction of the human species." And if you do not wish others to use the trivializing jargon of science fiction, why do you characterize the president's Strategic Defense Initiative as "Star Wars" (the buzz word of its detractors) and lasers as "ray guns" (of comic book fame).

I do agree with Carl Sagan when he says "that nuclear war could end all human life on Earth," but then so could AIDS, abortion and homosexuality, or a collision with Mars or Venus, which Sagan the astronomer will tell you is possible but hardly probable. Nuclear war is possible but hardly probable as long as there are people (who really understand the entire problem) discussing nuclear war and its consequences in concrete, human terms - in Geneva, even as we speak.

What frightens me is not nuclear war, not a collision with Mars or Venus, not the ray guns of Han Solo, but the directive that "when a country is selected for attack, we must first set up before the youth of that land a mental barrage which will forever prohibit the possibility of that youth being molded into an armed force to oppose our invading armies. This can be done most successfully by creating 'war horror' thought and by teaching of pacificism and non-resistance, It will be found that powerful organizations of non-communists can be created for this purpose, particularly with the aid of liberal-minded ministers, professors and lecturers.

Carl Sagan certainly qualifies as a liberal-minded professor and lecturer; his message is certainly one of "war horror," and your solution of everybody only dis-

all sources. A most competent

authority is Dr. Robert Jastrow

who reported on arguments against

Strategic Defense Initiative (High

Frontier). Dr. Jastrow, former

NASA physicist, is now a

Dartmouth College professor. He

stated that these arguments are

One case in point: The Union of

Concerned Scientists attacked the

High Frontier concept, stating that

necessary to ensure an adequate

Before a congressional committee,

I recently heard an average

American, with no scientific back-

ground, put this subject in excellent

perspective. He said: "If all these

people fussing about High Frontier

just put their critical faculties to

work, they would ask, 'Why is

Moscow giving High Frontier such

high priority for opposition and is

attacking it at every turn?' This

system, which can kill nobody and

is non-nuclear, is the greatest road-

block on their march toward world

G.F. Newberry

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Rochester

domination, that's why.'

the USC lowered its estimates.

'thousands' of satellites would be

false by factors of 25 to 1,600.

cussing nuclear war certainly borders on pacifism and nonresistance..

Before I close the book, the strategist who outlined the directive mentioned above was Lenin (of Marx-Lenin fame), the man who engineered the successful Bolshevik take-over of the Russian Revolution and who is the architect of World Revolution.

Patrick Henry asked the question once before at a critical point in our fight for freedom, and I ask it now: Is life really so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery.?

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EDITOR'S NOTE: More than one reader misunderstood the editorial 'Close the Book'' (see also letter "Bringing Nuclear Threat into Perspective"), perhaps because its point was too subtly made. The intention of the article was neither to oppose the Strategic Defense Initiative — an argument we prefer to leave to the experts - nor to promote non-resistance. Its point was that the initiative and other aspects of nuclear warfare should not be discussed in science fiction jargon — including the nonsensical label "Star Wars" and verbal or visual references to "ray guns."

The intention was to point out that the use of such terminology especially when combined with high-tech visual simulations of how the initiative might work — serves to make the notion of nuclear war less real and more the stuff of fantasy and adventure.

Not only does the media's geewhiz presentation of material on the initiative blur the concrete information, it also makes it too easy for people to ignore that the decisions being made are serious, and merit their interest and con-

As for Carl Sagan's contention that no ideological conflict is important enough to justify the destruction of the human race, we must agree. Life is God's greatest gift to us, and to destroy that gift by our own inability to negotiate is, as Pope John Paul II has said, "the ultimate crime."

This is not to say that we should be pacifists and allow ourselves to be controlled by forces whose beliefs are abhorrent to us. But we must find a way to avoid that by some means that will not cause the annihilation of humankind.

Bring Nuclear Threat into Focus

To the Editor:

More deadly than "the bomb," mind conditioning is designed to program the American people to oppose the non-nuclear, spacebased defensive system designed to destroy nuclear missiles incoming to this and other countries. "Close the Book" (Editorial: April 17) points out that this system when used as a method of knocking out nuclear weapons is not "good, clean fun" and calls it a "deadly business.'

It is time that the followers of certain scientists, not specializing in this field, face the fact that the horrors they attribute to nuclear weaponry be put in focus. It is not nuclear weaponry that threatens; it is the Soviet possession of these weapons either for use or nuclear

defense, making the cost a factor for disapproval. Dr. Jastrow conducted his own experiment, examining all evidence from both sides, and concluded that 100 satellites would provide efficient defense. The Livermore Laboratory found that 90 would be adequate.

Those who write editorials based on certain scientists' conclusions should examine all evidence from

pings; mutilations; and other abuses. The March 7 newspapers across this country were filled with the findings of Reed Brody, former assistant attorney general of New York, as well as Americas Watch's latest study of human rights in

vestigating organization.

But, for me and thousands of other international observers who've gone to Nicaragua recently, the real proof of Nicaraguan reality is the evidence found there, speaking with the people who have lost family members to Reagansponsored brutality and seeing how "effective" our president's policy has been in stalling the progress of the revolution by forcing Nicaragua to spend almost half of its resources defending itself. The contras are not winning the hearts and minds of the people, but they are keeping Nicaragua from becoming the

I have not returned home from Nicaragua to merely inform either, but to challenge you - readers, journalists, editors — not to disbelieve Robert Bart or to believe me, but to go to Nicaragua. You can fly round-trip for less than \$500; living expenses are cheap, and you can discover the truth for yourself. Seek and ye shall find.

John E. Milich P.O. Box 333

children; rapes; tortures; kidnap-

Mr. Brody's report, covering 145 sworn affadavits, documents "a distinct pattern" of murders, kidnappings, assaults and torture of civilians. In a random inquiry, the New York Times validated these findings. Americas Watch — which came to similar conclusions — is a well-known, independent in-

example it could be.

Ithaca, N.Y. 14851



"YOU'YE BEEN MISINFORMED, MADAM! THE LETTERS STAND FOR MISSILE EXPERIMENTAL NOT WANKIND'S EXTINCTION:

Seek the Truth About Nicaragua

To the Editor:

Having just returned from six weeks in Nicaragua, I was quite disturbed to see your publication of Robert Bart's letter (Opinion: "Contras Need Aid," April 17). It is one thing to have intellectual debate; it is quite another thing to experience the truth, to know the deadly results that blatant disinformation can cause.

Bart's claim of "nearly 8,000 people" being executed by the Sandinistas after the revolutionary victory, his charge that "people suspected of anti-government sympathies are forced into the militia or labor camps where they pick coffee beans," and his depiction of a government without the popular support of the people is indicative only of desperation at the prospect of contra aid being rejected. It is in no way indicative of the truth.

As usual, Bart offers no documentation; but more shocking is your printing of such outlandish material. There must be some minimum requirement to the publication of dangerously deceptive statements.

Every major newspaper in this country and abroad reported on the abolition of capital punishment in Nicaragua immediately following the revolution. Scores of international observers, unrestricted in travel or access in that country, commented on the dramatic improvement of living conditions and human rights in that nation especially compared to neighboring U.S.-supported dictatorships. I have provided the writings of unbiased, respected and converted experts to sustain these arguments as well as to illustrate the means by which our government and media misinforms the public — right here in the letters column of the Courier-Journal. I have tried to set a standard for Robert Bart to

of statements. Contrary to Bart's statement about the "democratic" nature of the contras are reams of evidence detailing their artrocities: civilian murders of men, women and

match regarding the documentation

The Courier-Journal welcomes your opinions. Letters must bear the writers' signatures, full addresses and telephone numbers. They should be sent to: Opinion, Courier-Journal, 114 S. Union St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607

Opinions should be brief, typed, double-spaced, and no longer than 11/2 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 writers' own styles.

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