

# AGENDA POLITICS

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Unfair judgments are made all the time. But there is a profound difference between judgments that are unfair due to error and judgments that are unfair due to calculation. We must tolerate the former but never the latter. With regard to the work of the Catholic League, it is the difference between those who are wrongheaded and those with an agenda.

Let me give an example that has nothing to do with the work of the Catholic League. Over the Labor Day weekend, the United Nations sponsored a conference on racism that was held in Durban, South Africa. Its purpose was noble—the eradication of bigotry—but the conference nevertheless proved to be an unmitigated disaster. That's because too many who participated had an agenda: their real goal was to bash America and bash Israel and as a result both nations withdrew their delegations.

Anyone interested in stamping out racism would not demand that the United States pay reparations for slavery. After all, the Europeans bought African slaves from African slavemasters. And while we made slavery illegal in 1865, Africa did not do so until 1980. More important, slavery flourishes in Africa today, especially in Sudan and Mauritania. Yet the U.N. conferees had the temerity to bash the U.S. (By the way, in the event reparations are ever mandated by law, I want to know how much I owe Oprah.)

The Taliban are wiping out Christians in Afghanistan; Protestants are terrorizing Catholic schoolgirls in Northern Ireland; Eastern Europe is rife with murder; Chinese communists are persecuting Tibetans; Cuba is still a hellhole; genocide is commonplace in Africa. Etc. So out of the whole world, which nation does the U.N. conference target as an

oppressor? Israel.

Those who have an agenda are not interested in the pursuit of truth. Indeed, they regard truth to be a fiction. So they pursue politics. Shameless as they are unethical, these post-modern nihilists (many of whom reside in academia) will never let the facts get in the way. That is why they can teach the most abominable lies about the U.S. or about Catholicism and never blink an eye. When I was a college professor, I had a particular way of handling these hacks.

For example, when I taught a course in "Social Problems," I always assigned a textbook; this was unusual in itself as I generally eschewed assigning textbooks. Virtually all the textbooks in this field put the worst possible face on contemporary American society, so it didn't matter which one I chose. So bad was the presentation that if a Martian had descended to earth knowing nothing about America except for what he read in one of these books, he might rightfully conclude that we must be the most oppressive society in the universe.

I then took the book apart, piece-by-piece. How? By discussing whatever subject was covered in a given chapter—race relations, the role of women, poverty, health care—in a cross cultural and historical context. For example, I compared the U.S. record on whatever social problem we were discussing to that of other countries around the globe. Then I compared the U.S. record of today to what it was 100 and 200 years ago. The students quickly got the point.

I made these comparisons because I wanted to show that these textbook writers had an agenda—to bash America. I'd then ask the students why it is that so many professors and students would never stand for an instructor who only told them the best about the U.S. but nevertheless they accept as gospel those who only tell them the worst.

Similarly, all of us have done honorable things and things we deeply regret. Now if someone who knew us well were to tell strangers only the worst things we have ever done—and had the gall to present this as an accurate portrait of who we are—the picture of us would be patently unfair. Yet precisely this kind of intentional distortion of the record happens all the time in the hands of writers who have an agenda against the Catholic Church.

That's why I have a problem with many of those writers who are consumed with blaming Catholicism for the Holocaust. Any sober-minded scholar would first admit that anti-Semitism long antedated the rise of Christianity. He would further admit to the difference between anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism. And he would most certainly acknowledge that it took a distinctly secular and anti-Christian worldview to give rise to Nazism. In short, it took a Hitlerian agenda to put Jews into ovens.

We should not be offended when critical statements are accurately made about our religion. That is how we move forward. But those who have an agenda to discredit Catholicism deserve a firm rebuttal. They need to be exposed, confronted and defeated. To do any less is to cooperate in our own demise. And that is not something the Catholic League is prepared to do.