

BIGOTED ARTIST ANGERS CHRISTIANS IN ISRAEL

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on an artistic controversy in Israel:

A crucified sculpture of Ronald McDonald, called "McJesus," is on display in the Haifa Museum of Art. Christians have protested, and some of them have turned violent.

While the violence must be condemned, it is encouraging to see Christian leaders speaking out against this in-your-face exhibit. Leaders of the Greek Melkite Catholic Archeparchy of Akko have been especially outspoken in denouncing this insult.

The man responsible for the "McJesus" sculpture, Finnish artist Jani Leinonen, is no stranger to controversy. In January 2011, he led a group called the Food Liberation Army to crash a McDonald's restaurant in Helsinki: they were protesting the company's ethics. They walked away with a life-size statue of Ronald McDonald, threatening to "decapitate" the figure. He and his thuggish friends were later arrested.

Leinonen is not content to simply offend Christians: he is driven by hatred of Jews.

Leinonen is a rabid supporter of the BDS movement (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions), an effort to hurt Israel's economy. It has attracted many left-wing activists, penetrating higher education and, more recently, the Democratic Party. Because of his allegiance to the BDS movement, Leinonen said he objects to his work being displayed in Israel.

"I joined the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, that upholds the simple principle that Palestinians are entitled to the same rights as the rest of humanity," Leinonen said. If we ignore what the BDS cause is, there is no

trace of hatred there. But he was not finished. "Israel overtly uses culture as a form of propaganda to whitewash or justify its regime of occupation, settler-colonialism and apartheid over the Palestinian people." There is there, and plenty of it.

To believe this is to believe that there is an orchestrated attempt on the part of the Israeli government to manipulate the culture—poisoning the minds of the people—so that it can justify its oppressive agenda. This is the voice of hate, one in service to crippling the nation in the name of liberation.

Israel is not the enemy—those who seek to disable it are.