

HUNTER COLLEGE NEWSPAPER SPORTS “CONDOM JESUS”

The November 24 edition of the Hunter College newspaper, *Envoy*, carried two pictures of a man putting a condom on his penis; below was a graphic representation of Jesus crucified to the cross, wearing a condom on his erect penis. This segment of the newspaper was entitled, “Culture Shock: Envoy Arts and Culture.” Hunter is part of the City University of New York (CUNY).

Above the first two graphics it said, “Condom Use Made Easy: Let Jesus Show You How.” It then said, “Begin Copulation With a Fresh Latex Virgin Mary Immaculate Conception Condom.” The inscriptions on the Jesus graphic read “Jesus” at the top and “The King of Kings” at the bottom.

When the Catholic League learned of this, it immediately went public with its denunciations. William Donohue got the attention of New Yorkers when he blasted the newspaper on WABC talk-radio with host, Lionel.

The student who was responsible for this, Jeremy Stein, apologized after the controversy surfaced. So, too, did Trina Bardusco, the student-editor of *Envoy*. Their apologies were printed in the newspaper. But the work was defended by student Jed Brandt, the production manager. *Envoy* has no faculty advisor and receives funds from student fees, but not from Hunter’s operating budget.

The president of Hunter, Dr. David Caputo, was disturbed to learn of the “Condom Jesus” fiasco and called Donohue at home to speak to him. When they finally did catch up with each other, Caputo appeared genuinely concerned about the matter and answered to Donohue’s satisfaction several questions about what was going to be done. Caputo issued his own press release

on the subject, which appears below:

***STATEMENT BY HUNTER COLLEGE PRESIDENT DAVID
CAPUTO***

In the November 24, 1998 issue of *The Envoy*, an independent student newspaper published by Hunter students, a piece appeared in the arts and culture section entitled "Condom Use Made Easy, Let Jesus Show You How." The headline was followed by three graphic illustrations, one of which depicted the Christ figure.

There has been widespread concern and dismay in the Hunter community regarding this incident. Personally, I can think

of fewer things more objectionable or morally reprehensible than what was presented in this piece. I find it highly offensive and join with the Hunter community to condemn such insensitive expression. This is clearly an example of a student publication deciding that shock value is more important than common decency and respect for religious beliefs. The individual who created this piece could have made the point regarding condom use without denigrating and openly defiling a belief system important to so many of us. I am confident that this repugnant action does not represent the attitude of the 20,000 students enrolled here. Furthermore, it is my understanding that *The Envoy* will be publishing an apology in the next issue.

I want to note that *The Envoy* receives its funds from student-paid activity fees. The students themselves vote on how these funds are allocated to various student clubs and media, including this particular publication. I encourage all who are concerned to express their objections through *The Envoy's* Letters to the Editor. Ultimately, the students have the right to petition that the publication's funds be rescinded.

David A. Caputo

President

December 4, 1998

William Donohue took the time to send the following letter to the school newspaper:

December 7, 1998

The Envoy

Letters Editor

695 Park Avenue, Room 211

New York, New York 10021

Dear Editor:

The November 24 edition of *Envoy* depicted Christ on the cross wearing a condom. I understand that those responsible for this vulgarity will apologize. That, however, does not resolve the issue.

I have been told that *Envoy* has a policy of not printing anything that is "racist, denigrating to women or homosexuals." Why it doesn't have a policy that covers religion is quite revealing, but surely the time has come. I would hope that the politically-correct police on campus would not be in a position to continue *Envoy's* hypocritical policy of selectively protecting some groups from bigoted attacks while allowing others to go unchecked.

A few years ago there was a racist incident on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania. While it was bad, it was nothing compared to what happened at Hunter. The response of the administration was to close the school and have faculty offer workshops on racism.

It is a credit to Dr. Caputo, your president, that he has not followed the politicized course of Penn. It is better to resolve these matters with the offending students instead of dragging the entire school through phony exercises in mind control. But it is interesting to note that there has been no major outcry from the Hunter faculty about this incident.

Perhaps if instead of Christ, the figure on the cross was Martin Luther King, the faculty's ire would surface. Would they idly sit back if, in February—Black History Month—there was a depiction of King with an erection on a cross wearing a

condom? Or just think what their reaction would be if *Envoy* were to promote a "Matthew Shepard" doll for Christmas: you can hang him, shoot him or stab him, and all he does is whine.

It is a sorry state of affairs when I receive an unsigned letter from Catholic students at Hunter alerting me to what happened (I had already acted on it when I received the letter); they were afraid to sign it because of the expected consequences. The fascist left, just like the fascist right, will always use intimidation (at a minimum) to get their way. That they are succeeding at Hunter is dismaying, and that these fascists continue to object to tyranny on the right shows just how vacuous they are.

Finally, students should know that a paid employee of the newspaper has defended this hate speech. He also told a reporter that "we're all Jews and atheists." Funny thing is that the one scholar who has had the greatest intellectual effect on me, Sidney Hook, was a Jewish atheist. So is my publisher and friend at Transaction, Irving Louis Horowitz. Thus I do not believe this slander, but I do note it: it shows how perverse the bigots in our midst really are.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.

President