

NATIONAL HISTORY DAY DELETES BIASED REMARK

In the last issue of *Catalyst*, we ran a story on education wherein we mentioned an ugly incident attendant to National History Day. No sooner was the November issue printed when we learned that the dispute ended amicably.

On August 1, William Donohue wrote to Cathy Gorn, executive director of National History Day (NHD), about the contents of a flier promoting its 2006 program. He objected to the following remark: "The student might choose an NHD topic involving a situation where a person or group failed to take a stand when they might reasonably have been expected to act. For example, what were the circumstances leading to Pope Pius XII's decision not to oppose Adolph Hitler before and during World War II?"

Donohue labeled this comment "outrageous." He provided evidence from two wartime editorials from the *New York Times* that singled out Pope Pius XII for being "a lonely voice" in a world marked by "silence" over Hitler's genocide.

To be specific, on Christmas Day, 1941, the *New York Times* had this to say: "The voice of Pius XII is a lonely voice in the silence and darkness enveloping Europe this Christmas. One year later, the *Times* wrote: "This Christmas more than ever he [Pope Pius XII] is a lonely voice crying out of the silence of a continent."

Donohue also noted the new book by Northwestern University professor Laurel Leff, *Buried by The Times*, that is highly critical of the *Times* for its nonresponse to the Holocaust. And he mentioned the new volume by Rabbi David Dalin, *The Myth of Hitler's Pope*, that defends Pius against his harshest critics. "Interestingly," Donohue said, "the students were not

asked to consider 'what were the circumstances leading to the *New York Times*' decision not to oppose Adolph Hitler before and during World War II?'"

Professor Gorn, who teaches at the University of Maryland, wrote to Donohue on October 26 apologizing for what happened. "I most sincerely regret that a leading statement found its way into the information for our 2006 program," she said. She further stated that the remark in question has been deleted from NHD's website.

Dr. Donohue commented to the press on Dr. Gorn's letter as follows: "This settles the matter. How such an irresponsible statement found its way into the 2006 NHD program in the first place, I do not know. But what matters at this juncture is that Dr. Gorn responded to our complaint without being at all defensive. Indeed, her response is nothing if not professional."