

NEW REPUBLIC FANS FLAMES OF ANTI-CATHOLICISM

The cover article of the December 30th edition of the *New Republic* contained a piece by Jacob Heilbrunn that alleges there is a growing war between Catholic and Jewish conservatives. The article, "Neocon v. Theocon," maintains that Catholic intellectuals have alienated their Jewish neoconservative friends by pushing for a Thomistic understanding of American democracy. The piece is in large measure a response to a recently published symposium in *First Things*, the magazine edited by Father Richard John Neuhaus.

According to Heilbrunn, the "mostly Catholic intellectuals" who comprise the theocons "are attempting to construct a Christian theory of politics that directly threatens the entire neoconservative philosophy." He then adds that this venture is seen by some neocons (none is identified) as one which "directly threatens Jews." The public philosophy that is ascribed to Catholic writers is labeled "not so much anti-American as un-American."

Catholic League president William Donohue had this to say about the article:

"It is amazing that such a highly regarded publication as the *New Republic* would stoop to the level of Catholic baiting. Heilbrunn chooses a symposium in which three of the five contributors are non-Catholic (curiously, one of the wives is identified as a 'staunch Catholic'; it is not mentioned that one of the Catholic men is married to a Jewish woman) to argue that these articles are symbolic of some nefarious Catholic theory. Moreover, the organ that published the symposium isn't even Catholic, it's an interdenominational journal.

"By charging that a few Catholic scholars like Father Richard

John Neuhaus and Robert George are threatening Jews, or that their ideas are 'un-American,' is as untrue as it is unethical. Indeed, these two men have been leaders in fostering better relations between Catholics and Jews. What the *New Republic* is doing is promoting dissent among conservative intellectuals, not reporting on it. That it has chosen the club of anti-Catholicism to do so is reprehensible.

"There are millions of Americans of all faiths who believe that we have an imperial judiciary, and some of them are questioning the legitimacy of the political order. This conclusion is debatable, but it is no more grounded in Catholicism than it is Judaism. Worse, the attempt to brand it as un-American and Catholic-inspired has a familiar demagogic ring to it.

"The *New Republic* is not generally given to bigotry. It is hoped this incident does not signal a change from its past record of excellence."

Note: Because of the seriousness of this story, the Catholic League purchased a full-page ad in the *New Republic*. We published this news release.