

# STICKS AND STONES REDUX

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“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me.” Kids who repeat such rubbish can be forgiven for mouthing childish statements, but adults should know better. If anything, history is replete with examples where a lot more than bones have been broken by name-calling. Remember what happened when they screamed, “Crucify him.”

Intellectuals know this to be true. As the British historian (and Catholic) Paul Johnson has shown, intellectuals are responsible for much of the bloodshed in history. For example, it was Marx and Lenin who provided the blueprint for Stalin, Mao and Pol Pot. These three monsters simply acted like good students, and the result was that more than 100 million men, women and children were murdered under their tutelage in the twentieth century. All done in service to a name. Marxism-Leninism.

Communists, as well as fascists, are known for banning art, books, movies, cartoons, magazines, music, sculpture, etc. They do so not because they're mad, but because they know that every form of human communication carries with it the possibility that the people might revolt. So they censor. If that doesn't work, they shoot them.

What's changed today is that Marxism is dead, save for places like China, Cuba, North Korea and American college campuses. Thought control, however, is alive and well. Take the U.S. While no one is being killed as a result of name-calling, attempts to shut down debate on issues deemed politically incorrect are rampant.

Quite a few subjects are considered off-limits in today's climate. For starters, just try to discuss the following in public:

- the universality of patriarchy (there is no society in history where women have been dominant, not even in those little societies that Margaret Mead found—she cleared this up before she died)
- the athletic superiority of males (the fact that we segregate the sexes in the Olympics is never questioned, not even by feminists);
- the large and persistent I.Q. gap between the races (this holds even when comparisons are made between whites and blacks of the same socio-economic class);
- gay sex practices and their health consequences (it is virtually impossible to have an honest discussion about this very disturbing issue);
- the way Jews in America responded to the Holocaust after they knew what was happening (a New York commission on this subject was shelved in the 1980s—by Jews);
- the accuracy of calling Indians Native Americans (there is evidence that others were here first, and in any event the Indians migrated here from Asia and are thus not an indigenous people);
- the daily disposal of babies aborted in clinics (“60 Minutes” wouldn’t have the guts to film it).

What’s not off-limits, however, is Catholic bashing. That’s okay. As a matter of fact, when the Catholic League complains about an anti-Catholic movie or play, we are told to lighten up—movies and plays aren’t real anyway. So why don’t these same people tell that to Jews and blacks who get bent out of shape over comic strips and cartoons?

On Easter Sunday, newspapers all across the country ran a Johnny Hart “B.C.” comic strip that showed a menorah being transformed into a cross. Some Jews, like those in the ADL, said the comic strip was offensive. So what happened? Several newspapers dropped the strip permanently.

Then there’s Bugs Bunny. The sensitivity priests at AOL Time Warner squashed 12 cartoons slated for airing during a 49-hour

marathon of Bugs' best. The reason? The ever non-judgmental entertainment executives judged these cartoons to be "racially offensive."

You get the point. All across the country we are banning Indian nicknames used by high schools and colleges. And in one New York school they have already banned Mother's Day simply because one gay father complained it was unfair. Yet if we Catholics merely express our objections to Catholic bashing, we're called censors.

Comic strips and cartoons, like movies, plays and artwork, communicate ideas. They form the way we think about reality and thus have behavioral consequences. When evil ideas permeate the collective conscience of a nation, it is not uncommon for evil deeds to follow.

That is why it makes sense for blacks and Jews to protest when they feel slighted, whether it be in the form of a comic strip or a cartoon. We readily acknowledge that it is easier to survive sticks and stones than it is name-calling. We just want the same rule applied to Catholics. And we won't give up until we get what we want.