

L.A. SCHOOLS PROMOTE CENSORSHIP; OFFER MADE TO TEACH TOLERANCE

On February 7, it was announced that the Los Angeles Unified School District had removed nearly 300 books from its library shelves it deemed offensive.

In December, 2001, copies of *The Meaning of the Holy Quran* were donated to the school district by a local Muslim foundation. This particular version of the Koran, published in 1934, contains footnote passages that label Jews "arrogant," "illiterate" and "men without faith." After a history teacher complained, the books were pulled from library shelves. A committee of history teachers, Jewish leaders and officials from the donating foundation was authorized to review the books.

William Donohue was impressed by the zealousness of the book banners, as well as their shameless hypocrisy. Academic freedom is, after all, the mantra among educrats. But not in Los Angeles: this same school district has previously censored bulletin board literature and books it found to be offensive to gays and blacks. And now their sensitivity alarm has sounded for Jews. There is no evidence that they have become similarly exercised by anti-Catholicism. This, however, did not stop Donohue from extending the services of the league.

On February 8, Donohue wrote a letter to Roy Romer, the superintendent of schools, and to the eight members of the school board, offering to help resolve the controversy. He asked to do the following: a) conduct a training seminar on the meaning of the First Amendment for all area faculty and administrators b) provide an historical overview of the consequences of state-sponsored censorship in Hitler's

Germany, Stalin's Russia and Mao's China and c) allow a Catholic League staff member to examine their library holdings for anti-Catholic books; we would then ask that these books remain on the shelves as testimony to tolerance.

In his news release on the subject, Donohue drew attention to the silence echoing from civil libertarian quarters: "The American Civil Liberties Union defends books that show how to make an A-bomb. People for the American Way defends books that are patently obscene. The American Library Association defends hard-core pornography on the Internet and even opposes the use of filters that keep little children from being exposed to it." And then let fly with, "But not one of them has objected to the book banning going on in Los Angeles."

Donohue ended his remarks by saying, "That's why the Catholic League's offer is so irresistible."

NEW ABC SHOW, "THE JOB," OFFERS OLD ABC ANTI-CATHOLIC FARE

On January 16, the season premiere of the ABC show, "The Job," depicted a detective dressed as a priest and a stripper dressed as a nun; it was not disclosed until the end that the "hot nun" is actually a stripper. The "nun" was shown stripping in front of one of the male detectives while three other detectives (two male, one female) watched her from behind a two-way mirror.

There was another scene where the "nun" put her foot on the crotch of one of the male detectives while being interrogated.

This was followed by a scene where she puts her foot on the crotch of a female detective. The detective “priest” was shown abusing the confessional by seeking to squeeze information from a penitent known to have stolen money from the collection basket. An actor who is cast as a real monsignor is then depicted as being more concerned about his own reputation than he is about the detective who misrepresented himself as a priest in the confessional

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We sent the following statement to ABC and to the media:

“We knew ‘The Job’ would be vintage Catholic bashing before we saw it and here’s why: a) the producer and star is Denis Leary, who has made several contributions to anti-Catholicism b) it aired on ABC, which has also made several contributions to anti-Catholicism c) the premiere was dubbed ‘Sacrilege,’ which means it had to be anti-Catholic because no other religion is treated sacrilegiously on any network and d) advance reviews of the show in several newspapers tipped us off.

“Verne Gay of *Newsday* said it best when he commented that while the show is funny it ‘will come as little consolation to practicing Catholics and other upright citizens.’ He also got it right when he said this proves how ‘desperate’ ABC is for a hit. Ditto for Disney, the slumbering giant that owns the network. We expect ‘The Job’ will make another contribution to ABC’s already clogged toilet before too long.”

PRO-ABORTION ACTIVISTS TARGET

CRISIS PREGNANCY CENTERS

New York State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer began the new year by issuing seven subpoenas to crisis pregnancy centers; he extended the February 1 deadline to February 15. The centers were ordered to provide documentation that will enable the attorney general's office to determine whether there is evidence of practicing medicine without a license or whether the centers have practiced deceptive advertising.

We raised the question because when Spitzer was a candidate for the post of attorney general, he protested a decision by Independent Health that would have excluded Catholic hospitals from its coverage. Spitzer blasted the decision as "heinous" and did so by holding a press conference in front of Mercy Hospital in Buffalo. Thus did he show his support for Catholic hospitals to decide their own health policies, including their right not to participate in abortions.

Yet no sooner had he been elected when he announced his opposition to hospital mergers of Catholic and secular facilities that honor Catholic prerogatives. It gets worse. "Catholics have also come to know Eliot Spitzer for his impassioned defense of laws that seek to repress the free speech rights of anti-abortion protesters," we said on February 1. We cited as an example that Spitzer has sought to stop protesters from "demonstrating, standing, sitting, lying down or posting or carrying signs" on certain city blocks near abortion clinics and has even sought to ban "excessive noise." Now Spitzer has targeted crisis pregnancy centers.

It is well known that Spitzer is in the pocket of NARAL (National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League), a group so radical it has previously supported infanticide. Spitzer's crusade to shut down crisis pregnancy centers has angered so many people, though, that his witch-hunt is in trouble. His counterpart in South Carolina, Attorney General

Charlie Condon, and Nassau County District Attorney, Denis Dillon, have both weighed in against Spitzer. It's time you did, too.

If Spitzer succeeds in New York, it won't be long before attorneys general in other states follow suit. So regardless of where you live, please write to him at the following address:

Hon. Eliot Spitzer
Attorney General
New York State
The Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

You can e-mail him at: webmaster@smtpgw.oag.state.ny.us

BLOOMBERG BECKONS FIGHT WITH CATHOLICS

When New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced that he was going to march in this year's St. Patrick's Day Parade up Fifth Avenue, his press secretary, Edward Skyler, was asked to explain why. At issue was the mayor's appearance at an event that excludes gays from marching under their own banner. Skyler said, "The mayor believes the best way to change an organization is to do so from within."

This didn't sit too well with us. Which is why the following response was made available to the media:

"Who does Michael Bloomberg think he is? If he wants to march in the St. Patrick's Day Parade, fine. But he should do so by

respecting the house rules of the parade's organizers. Gays are treated the same way pro-life Catholics are treated: both are banned from marching under their own banner but neither is excluded from marching, per se. If Bloomberg doesn't agree with the courts on this issue, then he should stay on the sidelines and state his reasoning.

"This issue revolves around three liberties: freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of religion. Regarding the latter liberty, it is outrageous that a government figure would seek to subvert an Irish-Catholic organization's autonomy (hasn't Bloomberg heard of separation of church and state?). Indeed, Bloomberg's interest in marching in the St. Patrick's Day Parade so he can change the will of the parade's organizers is manipulative and unethical. That is why he should do as he did last year and pull a no-show."

It remains to be seen whether the two Senators from New York, Charles Schumer and Hillary Clinton, will march in the parade. We're monitoring this one carefully.

DISNEY SHAREHOLDERS ASKED TO DUMP MIRAMAX

Once again, the Catholic League has locked horns with Miramax, the movie production house owned by Disney. This time the battle is over the film "40 Days and 40 Nights." Josh Hartnett plays a Catholic who pledges to give up sex for Lent but has his will tested by his ex-girlfriend. Because the movie opens during Lent (March 1), William Donohue asked Disney chairman Michael Eisner and Miramax co-chairman Harvey Weinstein to

reschedule the opening until after Easter.

Donohue's request was made on February 5 and the next day he was rebuffed by Miramax. So when we learned that the annual Disney Shareholder's meeting was scheduled for February 19 at the Hartford Civic Center, we decided to take action. We placed an ad on the op-ed page of the Connecticut daily, the Hartford Courant, on the same day, asking shareholders to press Disney to dump Miramax once and for all.