

PIUS: HOLOCAUST ENABLER?

For John Cornwell, Pius XII is “Hitler’s Pope.” For Martin Peretz, the pope is a Holocaust “enabler.” Peretz is the editor of the left-wing journal, *The New Republic*, and this was the charge he made in his article “Tel Aviv Postcard” on April 10.

Knowing that the journal has been around for quite a long time, we were curious to learn what the editors of the publication had to say about the Holocaust while it was happening. To that end, we secured a book, *The New Republic Reader: Eighty Years of Opinion & Debate*, to see what one of their own, Dorothy Wickenden (former executive editor of the journal) had to say about *The New Republic’s* record at the time.

On page 9 of the book, Wickenden writes that “Astonishingly, under an editor who had continued the magazine’s critiques of American injustice and who recognized the dangers of fascism, *The New Republic* counseled fatalism and restraint in the face of Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco.” She was speaking of Bruce Bliven, under whose tutelage “*The New Republic* became unreservedly left-wing.”

In a letter to the editor, after recounting this bit of history, William Donohue took off the gloves: “Before any more fingers are pointed at Pius XII—who did more to save Jews than anyone else—let him first take a hard historical look at what his ideological kinfolk did at the time of the Holocaust. *The New Republic*, like the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, are the ones who need to apologize for their shameful silence in the face of genocide and stop with the scapegoating of Pius XII.”

Readers of *Catalyst* should be prepared to see us use this quote over and over and over again. We will let the world know

who really went mute during the Holocaust.

ANTI-CATHOLIC GAY GROUP RESURFACES FOR EASTER

The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a group of homosexuals dressed as nuns, have events scheduled for Good Friday and Easter Sunday in San Francisco. On Good Friday, they will sponsor "Hot Cross Buns," a fetish fashion show that provides "a chance to get spanked" (free Sticky Buns are awarded to those who get spanked). Dr. Carol Queen will be there featuring his/her (?) Good Vibrations Dildo Fashion Show.

On Easter Sunday, The Great Tricycle Race will take place in the Castro district. It will conclude with the Sisters' annual Easter Bonnet and Hunky Jesus contest.

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, commented as follows:

"Homosexuals can get dressed up as nuns, win the support of local government officials, receive a tax-exempt status for their efforts, and can do virtually anything they want to insult Catholics, just so long as they don't ride their tricycles without a helmet. Too bad we don't send them to Cuba and let Elian stay here—then they could learn how much tolerance Fidel has for their lifestyle, with or without their helmets."

CENSORING Dr. LAURA

One of the pet peeves of the Catholic League is the extent to which our critics do a flip-flop when it comes to their allies. To be specific, it is not easy to listen to those who rail against us—calling us “censors”—when we protest a movie or TV show, and then watch them defend their ideological friends when they do the same. The reaction to Dr. Laura Schlessinger’s upcoming TV show is a textbook example of what we mean.

The same San Francisco board of supervisors who defended as freedom of speech the right of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence to mock Catholics in 1999 has passed a resolution demanding that Dr. Laura change her views on homosexuality before she goes on TV. The same Susan Sarandon who defended as freedom of speech the right of the Brooklyn Museum of Art to host the “Sensation” exhibition, is campaigning against Dr. Laura’s TV show. Ditto for the ACLU.

All of which is to say that Dr. Laura has drawn the phonies out, and for that we can all be grateful.

PROPAGANDA MASKED AS EDUCATION

The substitution of propaganda for objective reporting is bad enough, but when it is transmitted as education to unsuspecting students, it is unconscionable. This explains our reaction to some recent broadcasts by Channel One Network that made their way into classrooms around the country, including Catholic ones.

Channel One is used by many teachers as an educational resource (free TV's are supplied as an incentive to use the network). News programs on current events are made available and are often of high quality. Unfortunately, coverage of the pope's trip to the Holy Land was propaganda disguised as education. We told Andy Merlis, the network's producer, that the work of Cindy Lin was more than tendentious—it smacked of bias.

Lin said that “While the pope has made apologies before, this is the first time any pope has made a public plea for forgiveness for the *horrors committed by Catholic groups over the centuries.*” (Our emphasis.) This is just one example of the kind of exploitative language that marred the presentation.

Lin's sense of history is even worse. She said that the pope's apology did not specifically mention the Holocaust and the failure of the wartime pope “to do anything to help the Jews during World War II.” As we pointed out, there is a reason for this—no one saved more Jews than Pope Pius XII—a pope that the current pope continues to defend.

Lin would have students believe that in recent centuries, “the church is said to have treated badly groups such as women, gays, minorities and the poor.” But said by whom? Bigots? That more women than men attend Mass is something Lin would have a hard time explaining, just as she would have a hard time pointing to the anti-gay teachings and practices of the Church. And it is beyond comprehension that anyone would accuse the Catholic Church of being against minorities and the poor.

What Lin did was to use the pope's statement of contrition as a club to whip the Church. While she was not alone in doing so, her offense was worse than most simply because it was sold under the guise of education.

SENATE ASKED TO DEFEND HOLY SEE

On March 21, the Catholic League formally wrote to all 100 U.S. senators asking them to support Senate Resolution #87: introduced by Senator Bob Smith of New Hampshire, the resolution supports the current status of the Holy See at the U.N. and denounces the anti-Catholic campaign to unseat it.

“As you know,” William Donohue said, “the Holy See has an internationally recognized legal position and a diplomatic history that is 1,600 years old. The Holy See has formal diplomatic relations with 169 nations, including the United States. It also maintains 179 permanent diplomatic missions and has had Permanent Observer status at the United Nations for over 36 years. The Holy See has been an active participant in United Nations activities since 1946. Unlike other small states, the Holy See does not possess a vote in the General Assembly.”

To emphasize the particular role of the Catholic League in this issue, Donohue outlined for the senators what was driving the anti-Catholic campaign. He said it was being led by “Catholics for a Free Choice, a pro-abortion advocacy organization that has no relationship to the Catholic Church and no definable membership. It has aligned itself with fringe groups such as American Atheists, Inc., the American Humanist Association, Atheists United, and something called ‘Dirty Dirt & and The Dirts’ in this attack on the Holy See.”

While the anti-Catholic campaign is not likely to succeed, the Catholic League is taking no chances. This is an issue that we are determined to fight to the finish. It will resurface in

June when the U.N. holds its Beijing + 5 Women 2000 conference.

MORE ANTI-CATHOLIC ADS

As readers of *Catalyst* know, anytime we spot one of the anti-Catholic ads of the Eternal Gospel Church in a newspaper, we immediately ask the publisher to refrain from accepting such ads in the future. Fortunately, most newspaper publishers listen to reason and do not intentionally seek to promote bigotry.

Our latest victory is the *Columbian*, southern Washington's largest daily. An official with the newspaper told us, "We'd like to assure you that we would not run that advertisement in the future. In retrospect, it was inappropriate." Now that's responsible journalism.

We no sooner won on this when we learned that the same ad was run in the *Fresno Bee*. Then we learned that another splinter group, the Sweetwater Seventh Day Adventist Church, ran a similar ad in the North *Port Sun-Herald* in Florida and *The Record* in New Jersey. The publishers of all three newspapers have been asked to not to accept these ads again.

IT'S A DUNG DEAL

New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani threatened to evict the Brooklyn Museum of Art after it hosted the "Sensation" exhibit

last fall that featured a dung-stained Virgin Mary portrait. The museum struck back suing the City for violating First Amendment rights. On March 27, both sides agreed to settle their dispute by dropping their respective suits.

Though the legal battle is over, the political and moral implications endure. Mayor Giuliani scored big with Catholics for standing against Catholic bashing and Hillary Clinton failed to muster any public sentiment with her hands-off approach. Morally, the museum was embarrassed by the disclosure that its officials hustled money from those who had a commercial interest in the exhibit. That they should have been embarrassed, but clearly were not, by bringing this low-class show to New York proved to be one of the most significant aspects of the whole affair.

If there is one myth in this controversy that still needs to be debunked it is the idea that Chris Ofili, the artist of "Nigerian ancestry," really meant to make a sweet statement by throwing dung on "The Holy Virgin Mary." Nicolaus Mills, professor of American Studies at Sarah Lawrence College, kept this mythology going when he wrote in *Newsday* that the dung was placed on the portrait "in a complimentary way." He even understood the porn pictures surrounding Mary in a positive way.

William Donohue wrote to the newspaper challenging this "racist rumor" by labeling Mills' account as "bull." "I recently asked a Nigerian about this," Donohue explained, "and he was perplexed why anyone would preach such nonsense (he hasn't been exposed to the mythology of multiculturalism). Indeed, a little research disclosed that dung in Africa is not used as an honorific statement but as a measure of contempt. If Mills isn't persuaded, let him bring a pile of excrement as a gift to one of his African friends the next time he's invited to dinner and see what happens."

Donohue added by saying that it was Ofili who "brought his

elephant dung to the Brooklyn Museum of Art via the London Zoo,” and that although he is of Nigerian ancestry, “he was born and raised in England.” The Catholic League president closed by commenting, “He should keep his ‘installation’—feces and all—on his side of the Atlantic.” Now how’s that for a dung deal?

EXCITE’S EXCISION

After a complaint by the Catholic League, the internet search engine, Excite, has removed an insulting anti-Catholic element from its search facilities. We noticed in February that when someone typed in the name Mother Theresa (the correct spelling of her name in Teresa), up popped an obscenity. The same obscenity appeared when the words Mother Superior and Mother Driscoll were typed on the screen search aid.

In a letter to Excite CEO George Bell, William Donohue wrote that “I understand that Excite may not be able to regulate all the websites available but it certainly has control over the words used as suggestions for a search. It is this service of providing helpful suggestions which distinguishes Excite from other search engines. Presumably, Excite is trying to assist searches and not attempting to send them into completely unrelated areas.”

While we did not hear from Mr. Bell, the offense we complained about has been relieved now that the obscenity has been excised.

ETHICS OF ABC

We sent a letter at the end of March to the Broadcast Standards & Practices department of ABC registering our misgivings over three recent episodes of “Politically Incorrect.”

The March 20 show featured Bill Maher joking that at the Annunciation, the Archangel Gabriel didn't tell Mary that she was pregnant with Jesus, he showed her his “horn had turned pink.” Priests were cast as pedophiles on the March 9 episode and on March 1, jokes were made that there is no such thing as Catholic bashing; Catholic beliefs on abortion and birth control were the butt of jokes on this show as well.

Here is ABC's response: “I realize that it does not assuage your concerns, however, all religious and ethnic groups are equally treated by the show and probably equally offended.” To which we say: a) baloney and b) even if it were true, what kind of ethics is this?

EDUCATION: VASSAR STYLE

It was billed as a forum on “Literature, Homosexuality, and Catholicism in the Nineteenth Century,” featuring Richard Dellamora from Trent University in Canada and Ellis Hanson from Cornell. That gave us pause. It gave us more pause when we learned that it was being held on the campus of Vassar College and was being sponsored by the English Department, the Office of the President and the Queer Coalition.

This mega-educational event was held on April 12. Though the room was set for 250 people, only 50 showed up, and half of

them bolted before it ended. We know this because we had a mole in the crowd. After all, if they are going to accuse Catholics of being secretive, we might as well earn our stripes. Here's what we learned.

Only about 10 percent of the lectures dealt with Catholicism. Most of it centered on literature and homosexuality. Like good deconstructionists, the gay professors analyzed the sentence structure, looking no doubt for some hidden meanings. Too bad someone didn't ask them to explain what the meaning of is, is.

Professor Hanson went first, speaking on "Love for Love's Sake," a topic that admittedly has a nice ring to it. Unfortunately, Hanson's understanding of love allowed him to equate Christianity with sadomasochism, thus proving that professors are capable of extracting the ugly from the beautiful.

Hanson charged the Church with being both homophobic and homoerotic, and made it known that his new book, *Exquisite Pain: The Art of Erotic Suffering*, will soon be published. Surely the President's Office will buy a few copies though it is not certain whether anyone else will.

Professor Dellamora spoke on "*The Well of Loneliness* and the Rhetoric of Sexual Dissidence." The lousy turnout for this magisterial discussion does not speak very well for Vassar, but maybe there was another Queer Coalition event going on that evening on campus. In any event, Dellamora said that the Crucifixion is a symbol of sexual dissidence and that Adam's catching of the blood of Christ represents some type of exchange of body fluids. This lecture, we are glad to note, was free.

One final item. When we first heard about this forum, Patrick Scully called the president's office to inquire about the nature of the talks. He was told in no uncertain terms that the president, Frances Daly Ferguson, wanted us to know that

she supports free speech and gay rights. What this had to do with his question, we still don't know. But we know this: the president is a member of the board of trustees of the Ford Foundation, the generous benefactor of Catholics for a Free Choice.