

ALBANY LAWMAKERS MUST CENSURE ADELE COHEN

Catholic League president Bill Donohue wrote to every member of the New York State Assembly today asking them to censure one of their colleagues, Adele Cohen. The request was occasioned by Cohen's treatment of Catholics when they met to discuss tuition tax credits. Donohue explains as follows:

"On February 14, when eighth-grade students from St. Patrick's School in Bay Ridge met with Cohen, they were treated to a lecture on how women should not be stay-at-home moms. Her dismissive treatment of the students grew worse when she met the pastor and principal of St. Bernadette's in Dyker Heights: Cohen literally shut the door in their faces. What occasioned her insolence was a comment made by the principal, Sister Joan DiRienzo, that Cohen's refusal to even meet with the group from St. Bernadette's would be remembered in November. According to Sister Joan, 'In the very brief time we had with Ms. Cohen, asking to be heard, she made a derogatory comment to me personally. She was not only rude, but also sarcastic.'

"Sensing that she had offended Catholics, Cohen tried to spin the issue by writing a letter to Brooklyn Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio claiming she was victimized by the Catholics who met with her. But even in this instance, she couldn't hide her contempt for Catholicism: 'It makes me wonder what kind of education the Church is providing in its schools.'

"Now if a group of Orthodox Jewish clergy, parents and children met with a Catholic lawmaker about the need for school vouchers and were subjected to an ideological harangue about the merits of stay-at-home moms, had a door slammed in their faces and were treated with insolence, what would happen? Add to this a scenario where the lawmaker writes a prominent rabbi complaining about the way he was treated and

ends with a snide comment about the kind of education being afforded in neighborhood yeshivas. Wouldn't that person be labeled a bigot? And wouldn't that be considered grounds for censure?

"The disgraceful behavior of Assemblywoman Adele Cohen makes her unfit for public office. A vote to censure her needs to be taken."

HILLARY CLINTON—OFF ON THE WRONG FOOT

Hillary Rodham Clinton announced her candidacy for the U.S. Senate yesterday by sending the wrong message to Catholics. "I'll be on your side in the fight against school vouchers, which drain taxpayer dollars from our public schools," she said. However, on December 14, 1999, Mrs. Clinton told 100 Orthodox Jewish leaders that she would back certain "constitutionally correct" methods for government to help private schools. On December 17, Catholic League president William Donohue wrote to Mrs. Clinton asking for clarification but she never responded.

On another matter, just prior to Mrs. Clinton's announcement yesterday, her campaign blasted the song "Captain Jack" to the crowd at SUNY Purchase. "Your sister's gone out, she's on a date and you just sit at home and masturbate," is how the lyrics read. Other lyrics put a positive spin on pornography and drugs.

William Donohue addressed what happened today:

"Bishop Mark Hurley recently criticized Vice President Al Gore

for feeding anti-Catholicism by constantly maintaining that vouchers drain money from public schools. Now Mrs. Clinton is at it, only this time her 'fight against vouchers' campaign comes on the heels of promising to deliver on offering public assistance to private schools. She needs to make up her mind on this issue and she needs to do so without offending Catholic sensibilities.

"It cannot be argued that playing a patently offensive song prior to welcoming Mrs. Clinton was a mistake. No, Mrs. Clinton's operatives wanted to send a message and they succeeded. It is mind-boggling that Mrs. Clinton's campaign chiefs would want to flag a sexually irresponsible song as a way of introducing her to New York. Talk about getting off on the wrong foot."

KANSAS CITY STAR UNHAPPY WITH SEX SURVEY RESULTS

This Sunday, January 30, the *Kansas City Star* will release its sex survey of Roman Catholic priests. Catholic League president William Donohue has read the Knight Ridder story on the subject (the *Star* is a Knight Ridder paper) and commented as follows:

"The sex survey is essentially bad news for the tabloid. The two most important findings show that a) 65 percent say the Church is 'caring and compassionate' in its treatment of priests with HIV or AIDS, while only 4 percent are critical and b) only 14 percent think that changing Church teachings on homosexuality would be extremely effective.

"It is clear that the tabloid did not like these findings. We

know this because while only 4 percent were critical of the Church in its handling of priests with HIV or AIDS, the one and only remark selected for publication on this subject came from the 4 percent pool. There were other examples like this, suggesting that when the raw data prove to be disappointing, those who offer the desired critical response merit a high profile.

“The story says that 800 of 3000 priests responded to the survey. Yet later it says that ‘some refused to participate and questioned the The Star’s motives.’ Well, now, isn’t this cute. By saying 800 responded, it suggests all from this group completed the survey, yet if this is true, how would they know that some ‘refused to participate and questioned’ their motives? Were these among the 2200 who didn’t respond or the 800 who did?

“One final point. The Torah forbids an Orthodox Jewish man from having sex with his wife while she is menstruating, and for a time afterward. During Ramadan, which lasts for a month, Muslims are forbidden from having sex during the daylight hours of their fasting period. Question: Will the *Kansas City Star* now do a survey of Jews and Muslims to see how many are cheating? And while they’re at it, they may want to explore why a reported 37 percent of Protestant pastors have confessed to having been involved in inappropriate sexual behavior with someone in the church.”

CATHOLICS TO RALLY AT

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART

On Saturday, October 2, the Catholic League will lead a rally protesting the "Sensation" exhibit at the Brooklyn Museum of Art. The rally will take place outside the museum and will begin at 11:00 a.m., when the museum opens.

Catholic League president William Donohue expressed his views on the rally today:

"No one has ever said that Catholic-bashing artists do not have a constitutional right to insult our religion. What the Catholic League has been saying, and what Mayor Giuliani has been saying, is that no one has a constitutional lien on the public purse to finance bigotry. Our protest is directed at two elements of this exhibit: the use of public funds to bash Roman Catholicism and the anti-Catholic depiction of Our Blessed Mother by Chris Ofili.

"No teacher who bashed his black, Jewish, or gay students could ever argue persuasively that he was engaged in free speech. Indeed, he would be summarily fired for promoting hate speech. Similarly, any artist whose work is being publicly funded cannot hide behind the First Amendment when he promotes hate speech.

"We hope that New Yorkers of all religions will join us in our protest on Saturday at the Brooklyn Museum of Art. Since the museum expressly warns that seeing the exhibit could induce vomiting, we will distribute vomit bags to the first 500 attendees.

"We are especially grateful to the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America and the New York Hispanic Clergy Organization for their support on this matter."

CATHOLIC LEAGUE HELPS ORTHODOX JEWS FIGHT YALE

The Catholic League has filed an amicus brief on behalf of Orthodox Jewish students at Yale University who have had their religious liberties abridged. The league's brief, prepared by William Bentley Ball, was recently filed in United States District Court for the District of Connecticut.

Yale contends that it has a right to force freshman and sophomore students to live on campus and abide by its living arrangements; if students object, they can live off campus, but only if they agree to pay the nearly \$7,000 room and board fee to the university. The Catholic League believes that the objecting Orthodox Jewish students should not be penalized for opting to live off campus. The students ask only that Yale respect their religious convictions: they cannot in good conscience accept living arrangements that allow for coed dorms and bathrooms, condom machines and "safe sex" literature.

Catholic League president William Donohue explained the league's involvement in this case:

"In his Catholic League brief in *Hack et al. v. Yale*, William Bentley Ball said that Yale's policy represents 'a serious imposition upon the religious liberty of Orthodox Jewish students.' Indeed it does, which is why we are fighting this case on both free exercise grounds and freedom of association.

"If the effect of Yale's policy were to incidentally burden religion, there would be little reason to protest. But this policy directly clashes with the religious rights of the students, so much so that it is 'severely coercive.'

“It says something about Yale’s alleged commitment to tolerance and diversity that it openly practices such intolerance for the diversity that these students seek. This case should never have wound up in the courts. That it has is demonstrative of Yale’s obstinacy.”

YALE VIOLATES RIGHTS OF ORTHODOX JEWS

Five Orthodox Jewish students who attend Yale University are being penalized for objecting, on religious grounds, to mandated residence requirements on campus. The students, Lisa Friedman, Jeremy Hershman, Elisha Hack, Batsheva Greer and Rachel Wohlgelernter, do not want to live in dorms where the sexes are integrated and where bathrooms are shared by men and women; they also object to such sexual messages as condom machines and “safe sex” literature in the dorms. Yale officials have instructed the students that the only way they can bypass living on campus is to buy their way out: the students have been told that if they pay the room and board fee (nearly \$7,000), they can live at home.

Catholic League president William Donohue outlined his concerns today:

“The Catholic League has been asked to review the situation confronting five Orthodox Jewish students at Yale University. It is our conviction that these students cannot be expected to maintain their religious commitments while being subjected to an environment that is so demonstrably antithetical to their beliefs. The degree of accommodation that they are requesting is reasonable and without burden to others.

"To force students to violate their deeply-held beliefs for the sake of satisfying Yale's sexually-correct living arrangements is unconscionable. It is also difficult to see how the much-vaunted goal of diversity can be accomplished when pluralism is so summarily abridged.

"The Catholic League is asking Yale administrators to reconsider their decision. In the event they do not, the league is prepared to join with others in taking whatever steps are necessary to secure justice."