



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CATHOLIC-JEWISH STATEMENT WARNS EDUCATORS AGAINST HOLOCAUST REVISIONISM

WASHINGTON--In a sharply-worded statement, Catholic and Jewish leaders have condemned so-called Holocaust revisionists who try "to camouflage their message of hatred and antisemitism under a veneer of scholarly terminology."

The Joint Statement on Dealing With Holocaust Revisionism was issued by the Interreligious Affairs Committee of the Synagogue Council of America (SCA) and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (BCEIA). The statement points out that the Holocaust revisionists in fact "seek to deny the crimes of the Nazis, particularly the attempt to exterminate the Jewish people...We condemn these prejudiced efforts and the racial hatred they would incite."

"In the guise of holocaust revisionism," the joint statement continued, "the deniers of the evils perpetrated by Nazism against so many peoples and groups in Europe sought to rehabilitate the tattered image of National Socialism (Nazism)" with some initial success "in unsuspecting academic symposia who took their claims to scholarly integrity at face value."

The statement warns educators that "the Holocaust deniers have adopted a new tactic, placing advertisements in college newspapers. Again hiding their true intent under more respectable guise, such as so-called committees for 'open debate' on the Holocaust, the

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unsolicited ads deny the reality of the gas chambers and of Nazi genocide."

"The deniers then argue that the first amendment should be read to impel university and college publications to publish whatever material they may choose to provide."

The religious leaders condemn such arguments as "a perversion of the First Amendment" and urge that "all educational institutions and their publications, whether official or student-sponsored, should unconditionally reject any efforts to deny the horrifying realities of the Holocaust."

The declaration was developed in the course of twice-yearly meetings, begun in 1987, between the Synagogue Council and the Bishops' Conference. The meetings cover a wide range of issues of common concern. The joint consultations are headed by Rabbi Haskel Lookstein, President of the Synagogue Council of America, and Cardinal John O'Connor of New York, Episcopal Moderator for Catholic-Jewish relations for the U.S. Catholic Bishops.

This is the third joint statement issued by the group. "A Lesson of Value," issued in 1990, called for a rethinking of the approach to moral education in the nation's public schools. In 1993 the group urged renewed efforts by educators, parents and religious communities "to help stem the proliferation of pornography."

The full text of the statement on Holocaust revisionism is attached.

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**JOINT STATEMENT ON DEALING WITH
HOLOCAUST REVISIONISM**

BY

THE SYNAGOGUE COUNCIL OF AMERICA

AND

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

Ever since World War II various extremist, often neo-Nazi groups have sought to deny the crimes of the Nazis, particularly the attempt to exterminate the Jewish people. We condemn these prejudiced efforts and the racial hatred they would incite.

In the 1970's, proponents of Holocaust denial began to camouflage their message of hatred and antisemitism under a veneer of scholarly terminology in order to regain respectability. Rather than stating their beliefs straightforwardly, they began to call themselves "historical revisionists," pretending to be interested in challenging and "revising" common understandings of the period.

In this guise of holocaust revisionism, the denials of the evils perpetrated by Nazism against so many peoples and groups in Europe sought to rehabilitate the tattered image of National Socialism (Nazism). To some extent they succeeded in getting their views considered in unsuspecting academic symposia that took their claims to scholarly integrity at face value.

Increasingly blocked from academic fora as word spread, the Holocaust deniers have adopted a new tactic, placing advertisements in college newspapers. Again hiding their true intent under more respectable guise, such as so-called committees for "open debate" on the Holocaust, the unsolicited ads deny the reality of the gas chambers and of Nazi genocide.

The deniers then argue that the First Amendment should be read to impel university and college publications to publish whatever material they may choose to provide. This is a perversion of the First Amendment. All educational institutions and their publications, whether official or student-sponsored, should unconditionally reject any efforts to deny the horrifying realities of the Holocaust.

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