

EDITOR'S NOTE

THE JOHN SHARPE AFFAIR

On March 7, 2007, Lt. Cmdr. John Sharpe, a fourteen-year veteran of the U.S. Navy, a top graduate of the Naval Academy, a former submarine commander, and dedicated naval officer, was relieved of his duties as public affairs spokesman for one of the nation's ten nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, the USS *Carl Vinson*. He has been suspended pending a naval investigation on charges of "anti-Semitism" and "supremacism." Sharpe's real transgression was to have run afoul of the exacting standards of the Southern Poverty Law Center, an extragovernmental group that has long specialized in raising money by grossly magnifying the threat posed by fringe groups on the far right. As readers of TOQ are aware, your editor and various contributors to this journal, above all Prof. Kevin MacDonald of California State University at Long Beach, have come under the SPLC's fire. Nor is that fire intended to be merely harassing: The SPLC shoots to kill not merely jobs but careers, on the campus, in the news media, and now in the armed services.

The Sharpe case is instructive not only as an instance of the SPLC's ability to ferret out its targets, and of its clout with American government (the leftist center already "trains" numerous law-enforcement personnel in "tolerance"), but also as evidence of its recent propensity to expand the boundaries of the impermissible by designating such previously mainstream individuals as Pat Buchanan "racists" and organizations as tame as the Young Americans for Freedom "hate groups." Given the complaisance with which regular media receives and publicizes SPLC's pronouncements, if successful the center's efforts could help to ratchet American politics in an opposite direction from that which serves the interests of the American majority.

Lt. Cmdr. Sharpe stands accused of being what the SPLC calls a "radical traditionalist Catholic," the leader of what the center styles (with its facility for the tabloid-tailored smear) one of a "dirty dozen" of "radical traditional Catholic" groups. Since the newspapers that have echoed the SPLC's accusations have failed to note it, it is worth observing that the center has so far issued no reports on the doings of far more active and significant extremists in this country among Muslims and the Zionist "settler" movement.

What is it about Sharpe that makes him a threat to order and discipline in the U.S. Navy? His IHS publishing imprint has brought out two well-received books, *Neoconned* and *Neoconned Again*, both of which are critical of the Iraq war and draw attention to the influence of neoconservatives in underwriting this disastrous U.S. foreign policy initiative. Contributors to this eclectic collection span the political and ideological spectrum, and include Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani, who, according to Thomas Woods, Jr.'s review on LewRockwell.com, "headed what in his day was known as the Holy Office of the Catholic Church," Pat Buchanan, the late Jude Wanniski, Joseph Sobran, Samuel Francis, Thomas Fleming, Prof. Paul Gottfried, David Gordon, Bishop John Michael Botean, retired army officer and former U.S. Military Academy graduate Robert Hickson, and a host of other luminaries. IHS Press was launched in September 2001 "to bring back into print the classics of [the] last century on the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church." Is this a subversively dangerous idea? Among other seditious publishing activities that the Catholic imprint has engaged in are reprinting out-of-print books by G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc, two controversialists revered by many Catholics and Protestants alike, but whom groups such as the SPLC are presently attempting to anathematize for occasionally criticizing Jews in their writings. Belloc biographer Joseph Pearce puts Belloc's reputation into perspective. "Considering the turbulent and virulently anti-Semitic times during which it was written, Belloc's *The Jews* is, for the most part, an exercise in carefully considered and controlled restraint,"¹ writes Pearce, professor of literature at Ave Maria University in Florida. Jay P. Corrin, author of *G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc: The Battle Against Modernity*, writes

Belloc's criticism of the secrecy that surrounded Jewish finance and its accompanying anti-Semitic tone was not untypical of his times. A general displeasure of plutocracy and its links with Jewish money was a common feature of Edwardian England, although explicit anti-Semitism was frowned upon in intellectual circles.²

Sharpe has argued in an interview posted in August 2006 that

People may call the authors of these texts "anti-Semites." That and a buck and a half, as the saying goes, will get you a cup of coffee. The question, I would think, is whether the texts are true or false, or whether they are worth reading or not, and not what names we can call the authors. Or should we burn at the stake the Jesuits who edited the *Civiltà Cattolica* — established by Pope Pius IX and commended by Benedict XV — because they published a series of articles in the 1890s called "On the Jewish Question in Europe?"

Thanks to the deference with which the American media greets the SPLC's accusations, the group's ulterior motives have generally been ignored. In the case of Lt. Cmdr. Sharpe and the radical Catholic traditionalists, that is a pity, particularly in view of the juicy irony by which the SPLC's leftist operatives are now claiming for their organization the prerogatives of the Vatican's now defunct *Index prohibitorum librorum*. Nor would achieving the dismissal of

Sharpe from the U.S. Navy sate the SPLC's appetite for uninformed offenders against political correctness: If "anti-Semitism" is intolerable in a lieutenant commander, why shouldn't "homophobia," another of the center's bugbears, as recently expressed by Marine Corps General Peter Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, be grounds for sacking as well?

In today's America, the Southern Poverty Law Center and like groups have assumed an importance far beyond the anticommunist purges of the late 1940s and 1950s. Whatever their excesses, the latter were in response to a largely external threat and (liberal doomcriers to the contrary) had an impact on the nation's intellectual vitality that was at worst superficial and brief. The movement spearheaded by the SPLC, the Anti-Defamation League, and other such groups has been operating for decades now, more effectively and with less scrutiny than the red-hunting groups ever did – and today's thought police are advancing an agenda aimed at intimidating America's white majority into silence, passivity, and surrender as their country is transformed into a place in which minority races are privileged over the minority, the alien over the native, and the deviant over the normal.

The obsessive zeal with which the SPLC and other wardens of political correctness assail any expression deemed either pro-majority or unwelcome to minority interests extends from the aircraft carrier to the academy, from the airwaves to the printing press, and it ranges over scholarly research, political argument, and tasteless joking. Where it is not yet possible to circumvent the First Amendment, economic threats of the sort recently put into play against Don Imus are brought to bear, or, in the case of Kevin MacDonald, a tenured professor, strained efforts to impute impropriety (all of which fortunately have failed in MacDonald's case).

Nor do attacks of the sort leveled against Lt. Cmdr. Sharpe and the others aim merely at inhibiting freedom of expression. The next step is to change thinking, and then to mandate behavior. Take the legislation that provides additional penalties for crimes deemed to have motivated by racial and religious hatred, most recently embodied in the proposed federal Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes bill, which would have the effect of making many ordinary assaults into federal crimes. In practice such laws have badly skewed law enforcement by establishing categories of victimization based on preferential minority status, and cultivated an atmosphere in which media feeding frenzies and minority hues and cries have frequently made it very difficult for majority members accused of such crimes to obtain justice, as in the recent near railroading of the Duke lacrosse team.

What distinguishes *The Occidental Quarterly* from ordinary victims of political correctness is that TOQ was founded to do battle with the enemies of the West. Eschewing racial slurs and vulgar humor, TOQ has made it its policy to attack and to expose the central myths and the key lies of those who, like the SPLC and the ADL, have worked to erode the West and demoralize

its peoples. In place of the smear or the arrest warrant, TOQ's weapons have been the reasoned arguments of its contributors. Its sympathies have been men like Lt. Cmdr. John Sharpe rather than prosecutor Mike Nifong or the SPLC's Morris Dees. At TOQ we believe that to prevail, the men and women of the West must conquer and hold the high ground of ideas, and with your help we intend to continue fighting for that ground.

In this issue of *The Occidental Quarterly*, Professor John Glad, a former Guggenheim Fellow, former director of the Kennan Institute at the Woodrow Wilson Center, and professor emeritus of Russian literature at the University of Maryland, explains why he decided to explore the study of eugenics. In a question and answer interview, Dr. Glad expands upon the importance of genetic screening, why the future of Western societies depends upon genetic selection, and what we must do to enhance the quality of life. Professor Ralph Scott, who brings a life's work in education to bear on the ramifications of Bush administration's calamitous "No Child Left Behind" policy, debunks the psychosocial myths that underlie this egalitarian mirage. Tomislav Sunic examines the unique aspects of American society from a European perspective. Edmund Connelly offers another penetrating analysis of Jewish impact on American culture in his review/essay of *Jews and the American Soul*. Book reviews by Prof. Robert Griffin and Ed Dutton span the religious and political landscapes of the "white nationalist" and "fascist fringe," with Griffin gauging a substantive book on American racialist paganism and Dutton, the limitations of a personality – that of Sir Oswald Mosley – and the fringe British political movement it dominated. Other reviews by Mark Wegierski and Nelson Rosit explore various aspects of conservatism (cultural and political aspects) in relation to Middle America. ■

ENDNOTES

1. Joseph Pearce, *Old Thunder: A Life of Hilaire Belloc* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2002), 201.
2. Jay P. Corrin, *G. K. Chesterton & Hilaire Belloc: The Battle Against Modernity* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1981), 24.